

# A Socialist ACTION

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30p

## Thatcher's puppet courts



THIS WILL be remembered as the week when the real nature of Britain's legal system was dragged out into full public view.

If anyone believed that the courts were somehow 'neutral', and not political, just look at the events of the last seven days. The courts not merely meted out class justice in general but danced to every single tactical tune the Thatcher government required.

● On Friday the courts appointed a second receiver for the assets of the NUM after the failure of the first.

The team of sequestrators, Price Waterhouse, became worried they would not get their money back so the government announced on Monday it was guaranteeing payment out of state funds.

So much for the 'independence' of the judicial process from the government! Thatcher wanted a ruthless legal assault on the NUM so the courts came up with the required decision.

● On Tuesday the government faced a different type of problem. It didn't want a head-on confrontation with the TGWU in the aftermath of the Austin Rover strike, simultaneously with its struggle with the NUM.

So Mr Justice Hodgson, High Court judge, suddenly discovered a completely obscure court official — the 'Queen's Remembrancer'. With a finesse seen previously only in the case of the equally famous 'Official Solicitor' at the time of the Pentonville Five in 1972, this flunkey, whose post was created by William the Conqueror, was wheeled out to avoid sequestrating the assets of the TGWU. He will carry out the job by tapping the bank account of the NUM.

The difference between this action and that against the NUM was explained on the television as: 'the Austin Rover strike was over whereas the NUM strike is going on' — and if you believe *that* explanation, and not that the government wanted to avoid a simultaneous confrontation with two unions, you'll believe anything.

Again the court delivered exactly the decision the government required.

● On Tuesday the High Court forbade the Polytechnic of North London student's union to donate £1000 to the NUM under its *ultra vires* rules. Do you imagine that court decision had any political content? Surely not?

In reality the pressure of the miners' strike has forced into the open the farcical nature of the idea that the British legal system is above politics. It is a pure and simple instrument of capitalist rule and dances to whatever tune capitalist interests require.

And what message did the wonderful leader of the Labour Party Neil Kinnock give us? That the law, the supposedly 'neutral' law, must be obeyed under all circumstances. A remark that no 19th century liberal, let alone a 20th century socialist, would have contemplated for one moment. At least *they* put individual conscience, let alone the rights of the organised labour movement, above the interests of a purely class based law.

What the Labour Party should have been explaining is not the need to obey the law but the farce of the present legal system. That there is *no* obligation whatever to obey unjust laws which are not neutral but manipulated to the requirements of the capitalist class.

But there would be a problem in doing so. After all, Neil Kinnock's type of reformism argued 15 years ago against 'dogmatic' Marxism, that there would never be another major capitalist economic crisis again. We can see today who was right in that particular dispute.

To admit that our courts and legal system are instruments of the needs of capitalism might fit the facts, but that would be to concede the Marxist argument that the state is an instrument of class rule. The fight on that would be rather educative!

Perhaps it is no surprise that Neil Kinnock thought it more urgent this week to launch a witch hunt in the Labour Party than to get on with building support against the legal attacks on the miners.

● See 'Into the labour movement for victory' — page 2

# Socialist ACTION

## No choice but to fight

PATRICK JENKIN has finally announced his Rate Support Grant for 1985-6. Eighteen 'high spending' councils in large urban areas have been told that they cannot legally get by without making massive cuts in planned expenditure on local services. The rate, and spending, cuts are even sharper than predicted.

In translating spending limits into rate limits Mr Jenkin 'democratically' says he has taken into account each council's financial reserves.

In Leicester ministers are demanding a cut in rates of 57 per cent. While Merseyside will be allowed to raise them by 27 per cent.

Ratepayers can legally refuse to pay a rate above the government imposed ceiling under the new legislation.

Sixteen of the authorities list are Labour controlled. Mr Jenkin simultaneously pointed out to parliament that savings from the proposed cuts would allow him to give more leeway to several Conservative-led country authorities — good low spenders of course.

The Tory government, as in the miners' dispute, is no longer even making the pretence of impartiality with its open use and abuse of the law.

In simple terms if this draconian legislation is implemented there would be increasingly little practical point in voting Labour in local council elections. Central government will determine what your local council spends, not your elected representatives.

If the seven local government unions affected by the Act are correct the legislation will chop 75,000 jobs in local government. The services lost to the community through rate-capping will be unquantifiable.

Patrick Jenkin now boasts that there has been a lot of 'blood and thunder' from Labour authorities but that a lot of these councillors are sensible and although they don't like the legislation they won't — in the end — break the law. Neil Kinnock and John Cunningham have no doubt encouraged Jenkin by their public utterances that Labour councils must obey the law under all circumstances. This will encourage wavering in the Labour Party to waver as the 10 March deadline draws near. Manoeuvres will be proposed involving setting higher rates, using up balances through creative accounting and no end of similar tricks.

But the carrying through of Labour Party conference and Sheffield local government conference policy of non-compliance with this legislation is absolutely crucial.

Waverers have to be nailed by their constituency Labour Parties, Labour groups and trade unions.

Councillors who do not wish to fight should take the advice of the London Bridge shop stewards and the Democracy for London Campaign and resign to make way for those who do and can afford to fight.

Those Labour groups, constituency Labour Parties and individual councillors committed to a battle have to do more than simply prepare for martyrdom.

They have to get out and organise with above all else the local authority unions, through discussions on their budgets and their chosen tactics of opposition, to ensure that the troops that can win this battle are solidly on their side.

Liverpool is the only council to date that has done this in a systematic fashion. Unsurprisingly it's the only council that can claim to have marked up any success. The same challenge now faces the rest of Labour controlled councils. After Jenkin's statement no one can imagine they are going to be able to avoid a fight.

### Prolonged viral war!

CONTRARY TO our solemn promise last week the Socialist Action staff continue to be cut down to half our normal complement by viruses.

We therefore apologise for the absence of a part of our normal coverage.

Contributions considered for wreaths etc. should however be sent to the fund drive instead!

The editor

# Into the labour movement for victory!

EVER SINCE the beginning of the miners strike the NUM leadership has pursued consistent tactics towards the TUC and the Labour Party.

Throughout the summer NUM leadership concentrated on building the impetus of the strike and avoiding surrendering the initiative to the TUC general council. The aim was to confront the TUC and Labour Party leadership not in a small committee but in the forum of the TUC Congress and Labour Party conference itself — where the relation of forces was far more favourable.

These tactics were openly explained and successfully carried through. The resolutions passed at Labour Party conference strongly backed the miners. Those passed at the TUC Congress would win the dispute if they were implemented.

## Struggle

But now the NUM is faced with a much more difficult task than the summer. Precisely because the TUC Congress resolutions would win the strike, and the Labour Party conference policies *did* back the miners, Willis, Kinnock and their supporters have *no* intention whatever of implementing and carrying through these policies.

This has been made transparently clear on every field over the last two months.

● While there have been steps forward on boycott of delivery of new coal in power stations no nationally effective action has been taken on the use of coal substitutes — above all the vast increase in oil burning. The GMBATU, and TGWU, have put out formal circulars on this but not secured, and failed to campaign for, effective action.

This is despite the fact the TUC policy is easy to deliver in terms of where to concentrate. The GLC report on the situation in the power stations, as well as other independent surveys, show that effective action at less than 13 power stations, all outside the scab heartland of the Midlands, would secure power cuts. But the TUC has made *no* systematic campaign oriented to these power stations at all.

● Norman Willis and David Basnett have flagrantly disregarded TUC Congress policy — not to speak of the declarations of open scabs such as Eccles and Lyons which have passed without criticism from the general council. The TUC Congress policy was 'total support' to the miners. But instead Willis has spent his time attacking 'violence' and Basnett proposing

'compromise solutions'.

If the TUC leadership had launched a massive campaign aimed at the ranks and been defeated then of course that would be one thing — to be defeated in struggle is not a betrayal. But *no* such campaign has been launched. Useful initiatives, such as the international meeting of unions to reduce coal imports, have not been accompanied by any mass campaign to deliver support on the ground in this country.

In short Willis and the TUC general council *have not* implemented Congress policy.

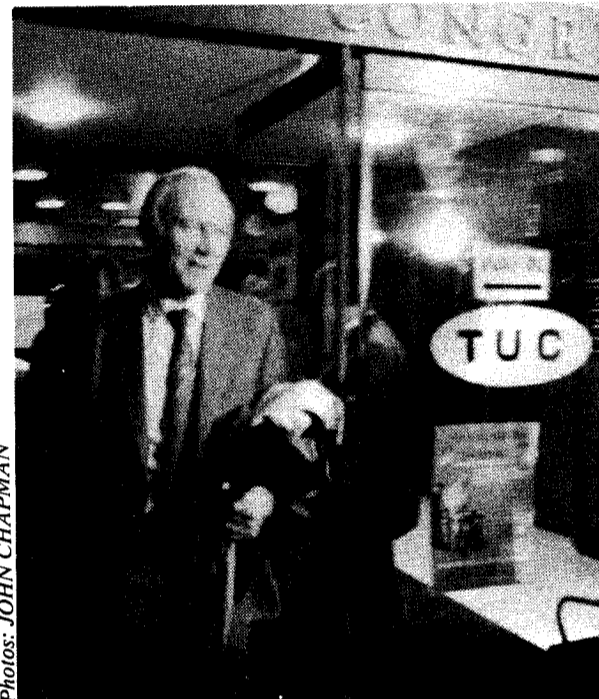
● The position of Neil Kinnock has been even more open and clear. The Labour Party conference expressed its support for the NUM in the most uncompromising terms. It refused to get drawn into any denunciations of 'miners violence'.

Kinnock however has spent his time *denouncing* 'violence'. Far from giving 'total support' to the miners, as decided by conference, he aroused widespread condemnation in the labour movement by his refusal to speak at the five national rallies of the NUM.

## Paper

In short the tactics the NUM pursued during the summer and into Labour Party conference and the TUC Congress delivered it resolutions which on paper would win the strike. The pressure of support for the miners was such that the TUC and Labour Party leadership felt unable to openly oppose these positions. But the NUM is now confronted with a Labour Party and TUC leadership which has no intention whatever of delivering on these decisions. How to confront *this* obstacle is the fundamental problem which the NUM faces today.

The fundamental way the NUM must tackle the problem is *by turning into the labour movement*. The TUC and Labour Party leadership fear to confront the NUM openly precisely because they know that practically 100 per cent of labour movement ac-



Joe Mohammed, Notts miner

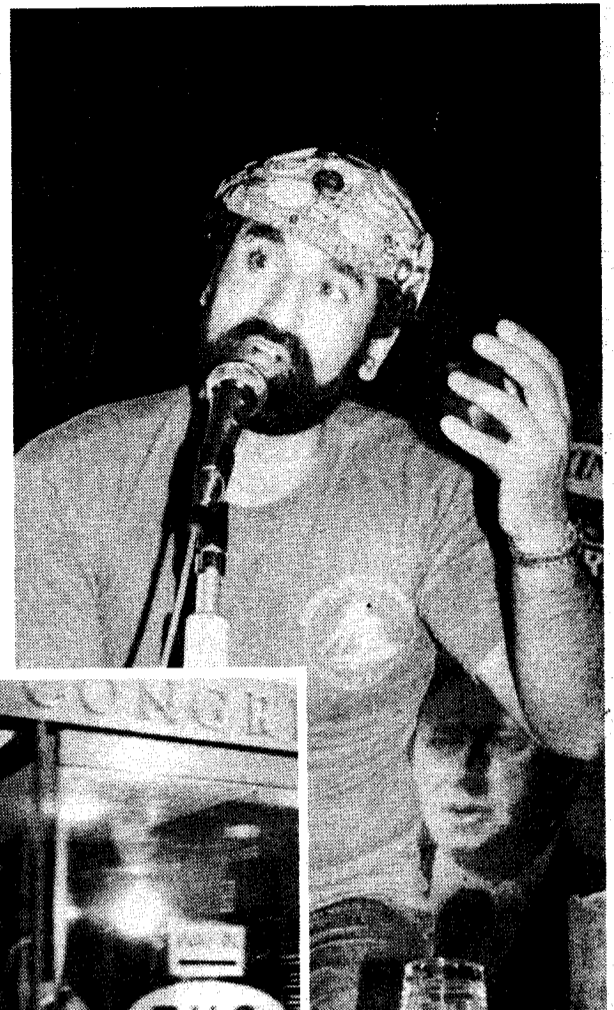
Basnett leaves TUC

tivists, and a very large proportion of their base, support the miners.

Even the opinion polls, which are directly distorted against the miners, show this situation clearly. According to the poll in last Sunday's *Sunday Times* 31 per cent of those questioned openly supported the miners compared to 46 per cent favouring the NCB. Given the incredible media campaign, and the failure to speak out on the part of the Labour Party and TUC leadership, that is actually an astonishingly high figure supporting the miners even in a poll.

If you translate these figures for the population as a whole into terms of the working class, and consider also the situation of the industrial working class, then it is quite obvious that the miners actually have *majority* support among the key industrial sections of the working class even in terms of opinion polls — let alone in any real activity and in terms of the views of the militant cadre of the working class.

It is because they know that situation that Willis and Kinnock remain concerned *not* to confront the NUM openly. Kinnock undoubtedly suffered, for instance, a major blow to his support with the reaction to his refusal to speak at the NUM's rallies. The problem for the NUM is that it is Kinnock and Willis, not the base and the left, which are the voices which are being heard. The task of the NUM, to turn the political tide, is to create the means whereby other sections of the labour movement can



NUM in which can participate both activists in the movement and, most importantly, the left trade unions which are backing the NUM.

● The third step is building for a national day of action, a 24 hour general strike, in support of the NUM.

This obviously cannot be built out of the blue. It has to be the culmination of a campaign, including steps such as a demonstration and a solidarity conference, but it has to be the definite goal of the NUM.

Finally, as it becomes clear that Kinnock and Willis are not implementing the decisions of the TUC Congress, and Labour Party conference, then the demand for the recall of the TUC Congress will begin to be posed. But again the NUM has to build up impetus for this in the strike.

The NUM has its own reasons for not openly denouncing Kinnock and Willis as scabs — although others need no such constraints. But what does have to be taken is the practical measures that can allow the rest of the movement to speak out.

## Local

These steps are not counterposed to the industrial solidarity which is necessary for victory. The most urgent task to win the strike is the fight for implementation of TUC Congress decisions on the power stations. But the strike is also going to be won or lost on the political terrain — and it is here the momentum for industrial support can be generated.

The NUM built itself a strong position during the summer to confront the TUC and Labour Party leadership. Now, having essentially defeated the 'back to work onslaught', the NUM has to cash these gains by turning into the labour movement with the practical steps which can gain victory — a victory which will only be achieved by squeezing not only Thatcher but also Willis, Kinnock, and Basnett.

make their position clear. This is why the NUM was so strong at the TUC Congress and Labour Party conference — because they provided *natural* forums for the movement.

## Key

There are at least three key means for this which Socialist Action has consistently campaigned for and which *remain* now, more than ever, key steps to politically winning the strike — and using that political edge to deliver the industrial muscle for victory. These are

● A national Labour Party/TUC demonstration in support of the miners. Steps forward are now being taken for this with the call of the Scottish NUM for a national demonstration. But the date which has been proposed for such a demonstration — 22 December — is insane. week away, which means it cannot be built for, but it is only three days before Christmas.

A national Labour Party/TUC demonstration must be set for the end of January. *Then* it can be built for in a truly gigantic way.

● A national solidarity conference called by the NUM. There is enormous support for the NUM throughout the labour movement. This has to be *organised*. The TUC Congress was one platform. The regional NUM rallies were another. The logical extension of this is precisely a national solidarity conference called by the

# Labour and a general strike



Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

**TONY BENN'S** speech at St Ives last Thursday, when he raised the need for the labour movement to discuss the question of a general strike, was widely reported in the press. It was accompanied by similar statements by other Labour MPs and NEC members — including Dennis Skinner, Audrey Wise, and Eric Heffer. A similar statement was put out by the editors of *Labour Herald* — Ken Livingstone, Ted Knight and Matthew Warburton. We are printing Tony Benn's speech in full. We also asked him why he had considered it important to raise the question of a general strike at the present moment. We make some comments on it in our editorial on page two this week.

**THE LABOUR** movement has now got to face the fact that a general strike might become necessary to protect free trade unionism, ballot box democracy, political freedom and civil liberties in Britain.

The government have now mobilized, and used, the full apparatus of state power, including the civil service, the police, the courts, the media and the financial system against working people.

After seeking to destroy the NUM, government attacks have now spread to the TGWU, the GLC, the metropolitan counties and all local authorities.

Workers in the great public industries and services are now being bought and sold by speculators, as if they were slaves.

There is no guarantee that these attacks will not intensify until we have passed the point of no return, as happened in Germany and Italy before the last world war or more recently in Chile.

We all know that free trade unionism led directly to the winning of votes for men and women, and that, in its turn, made it possible for a party of Labour to be formed to protect the interests of the working class through the ballot box.

All our liberties were won by struggle, often in direct defiance of the courts, and there is no moral obligation to obey unjust laws.

It is against this background that we shall need to consider our response to the growing threat to democracy in Britain.

We shall need millions of pounds, raised by a levy, to replace the money stolen by the courts and to pay for our campaign.

We shall also need to extend industrial action to back up the miners in their opposition to pit closures and



Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

*Eddie Shah and Thatcher rewarded by Aims of Industry for their services to the bosses*

unemployment. But it is becoming clear that we must also start discussing, and preparing, now, for the possibility of a more widespread withdrawal of labour by means of a general strike, for twenty four hours or longer. The 1926 general strike was called by the TUC in support of the miners who were faced with a wage cut. More recently, in 1972, the TUC

general council, backed by the national executive committee of the Labour Party, threatened a general strike if five dockers who had been arrested were not released from prison. Any decision to hold a general strike would require the most careful consideration, by the unions and others before it was reached. We should also have to decide when it should be called, who should

be involved, for how long, and what arrangements the movement would need to maintain emergency services.

As in 1926 local committees would have to be set up but these could be built up on the basis of the miners' support groups and women's action groups which already exist all over the country.

We should also need to set up our own communication network, and prepare plans for seeing that our case got across to the general public, possibly by setting up our own network of radio stations.

All these arrangements would take some time to make, which is why we must discuss them urgently, in each trade union and labour party branch up and down the country.

No-one would contemplate such an action unless it became the only alternative to a complete capitulation to a dictatorship.

But a general strike may prove to be the only way of reminding this government of the harsh realities of life.

They seem to have forgotten that their class allies — the bankers, industrialists, stockbrokers, judges, editors, chief constables and generals — cannot dig coal, manufacture goods, move trains, care for the sick or teach the young.

It is for us to make it clear that those who perform those essential tasks, and create the real wealth for the community are absolutely determined to maintain their trade union and democratic rights and civil liberties.

The government must be told now, that we are serious and this may help to bring the prime minister to her senses before the crisis goes too far.

We must make plain now that we are not prepared to have our freedoms stolen from us and that, if necessary, we shall call a general strike to protect the liberties of the people of Britain.

## Why discuss it now?

Could you tell us why you thought it important to make the speech you did last Thursday on the question of a general strike?

Because I wanted to put the question on the agenda for discussion in the labour movement. The Labour Party and the labour movement is democratic and sometimes cumbersome. Therefore I think we have to place the question on the agenda for every CLP for two reasons.

Firstly we have to discuss how we will respond to specific events — such as the use of troops or the declaration of a state of emergency. This is not just abstract. It is to the degree that we make our position clear that the government will back off.

Thatcher is not an iron lady. She is a paper tigress.

Secondly we have to discuss what type of general strike we want. There are many ways of doing it. The best is not necessarily a general strike of the old type. It may be better to run the trains and buses free — give people a taste of socialism.

Also we are beginning to see the type of organisation, then called Councils of Action which appeared in 1926 — only now they're called the miners support groups. All this needs coordination.

Finally this question needs to be on the agenda because people need to be challenged — what are you doing. It is not enough simply to give money — important as that is. There must be industrial support for the NUM.

There is much more industrial support than is generally realised. The



*1926 general strike — army on the streets*

railworkers in Leicestershire for example have not moved a single ton of coal despite 2500 miners working in the area. There has been huge solidarity by the seafarers union. But this must now be extended. I believe, for example, that the TUC should issue instructions not to cross NUM picket lines.

There is no moral obligation on us, or on the TUC, to obey a bad law. Anyway the courts are not going to come and arrest Norman Willis — we would see the response to that. Why

should Arthur Scargill be left to face these threats alone?

The reality is that the miners have far more support than the press will allow to be shown. I found at my meeting that even in a Tory stronghold such as Huntingdon over £4000 had been raised for the miners. After a difficult month in the coalfields morale is now very high again.

We are engaged in an ongoing campaign. I think we must discuss every issue which may confront us.

**Give these toys a miner's child to play with!**

This Christmas will be a little different for miners and their families. You can help make it fun. With this special gift scheme you can buy a toy for a miner's child. And your donation, to Women Against Pit Closures, will buy more than you could get in the shops.

The toys illustrated are being provided through the Co-operative Retail Society London Region Political Committee. The Co-op is giving a substantial discount on the retail prices shown, so your money will buy more toys for more children. If your donation is small, don't worry! It will all go towards making a child happy. And the gifts will be shared between all the mining areas.

**Socialist ACTION** gift scheme



Your gift to a miner's child	
Medical kit £4.99	Coffee maker, blender, mixer set £5.99
Lil Gumdrops, doll and clothes £5.99	Crane truck £6.99
Kiddie Plane, with passengers £5.99	19-piece tool bench £7.99
	Plastic bath toys £2.49
	Scrabble £4.75

If you don't wish to cut the page, simply note the details.

I am pleased to help bring Christmas to a miner's child through the special gift scheme. I enclose \_\_\_\_\_ for Christmas toy(s). Cheque/PO payable to 'Women Against Pit Closures' If you have a preference for which toy(s) your donation buys, please indicate \_\_\_\_\_ Please note that other toys will be substituted if the supply of any of those offered runs out.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Gift Toys, Women Against Pit Closures, c/o Southwark Trades Council, 42 Braganza Street, London SE17 3RJ. And thanks!

# Mineworkers Defence Cttee The left must go on the attack

**THE ATTEMPT** by the courts to effectively deprive the NUM of their elected executive is the most ruthless attack on trade union rights ever to be attempted by a government in the last 50 years.

The tasks of the solidarity movement become more burning than ever. The Mineworkers Defence Committee, meeting last Wednesday in County Hall following its successful conference the previous weekend, took this into consideration in moving to implement the decisions of the conference.

The battle for solidarity with the miners in the labour movement is sharpening. The NUM delegates made their view of 'bosses courts' and 'bosses laws' crystal clear on Monday 3 December when they voted to 139 to 80 to continue to defy the courts' ruling that their strike was unofficial.

Arthur Scargill, speaking the next day in Barnsley, went onto the offensive against the centre and right-wing of the labour movement.

To wild applause he said that the time for 'mealie-mouthed' resolutions was over. 'They can put receivers in, they can put sequestrators in, they can smear us and they can attack us. But there is one thing for certain. Provided we stand firmly together, this union is on its way to the greatest victory in history.'

Arthur Scargill went from this rally to a meeting with Neil Kinnock. Here, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and Audrey Wise made it clear what sort of response they thought was necessary to defend democratic rights against such an attack, calling for general strike action in support of the NUM.

Kinnock was not to change his tune however. He continued to denounce violence and said that a general strike was a diversion from putting the case for coal.

At the TUC Scargill got a similar response. The TUC and Labour Party leaders are still using the excuse of not coming into conflict with the law to back out of supporting the miners in any solid way.

It's clear that the left-wing inside the labour movement has to sharpen its attack on the right still further to ensure that the goods are delivered and the strike is won.

By Valerie Coultas

The absolutely number one issue here is the implementation of the TUC guidelines in the power stations. The Congress resolution not only said that workers should refuse to handle coal but that they should also only accept normal supplies of oil.

As coal supplies have been used up oil has been substituted. In some power stations double the amount of oil has been used. This is how the Central Electricity Generating Board hopes to avoid power cuts.

If TUC policy was implemented in the power stations, to the letter, the Tories would be on the run. In London the South East Region of the TUC is organising mass pickets at Tilbury and Neasden power stations.

Ken Livingstone and

the Campaign group of MPs have pledged themselves to attend the Neasden picket on 17 December and are calling on others to follow. Such mass pickets need to be built at every major power station in the country.

Secondly, given the courageous stand of the NUM, in defying the courts and risking all their union assets in the cause of the battle for jobs and the defence of trade union rights, the solidarity movement has to take a political initiative to show that the NUM is not acting only for its own members but for the entire labour movement.

## Demo

This means demonstrating that support on the streets of London. Discussions are now taking place between the NUM, the solidarity movement, the regional TUCs and the Campaign group of MPs to set a date for such a national event.

Such a protest coupled with the implementation of TUC decisions, will really begin to push forward the campaign for industrial action that Scargill has called for.

Thirdly it is vital that the fight is waged across the movement. The left has been weakened in the union movement over the last five years and to challenge leaders like Basnett, who are not fighting for these policies to be implemented, it is vital that a clear lead is given now. The NUM is in the best position to push this process forward.

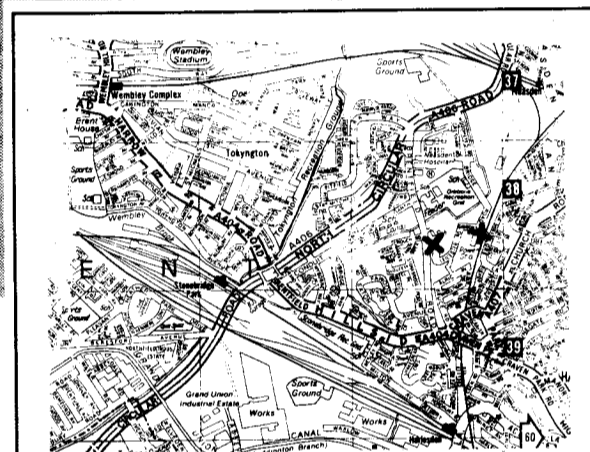
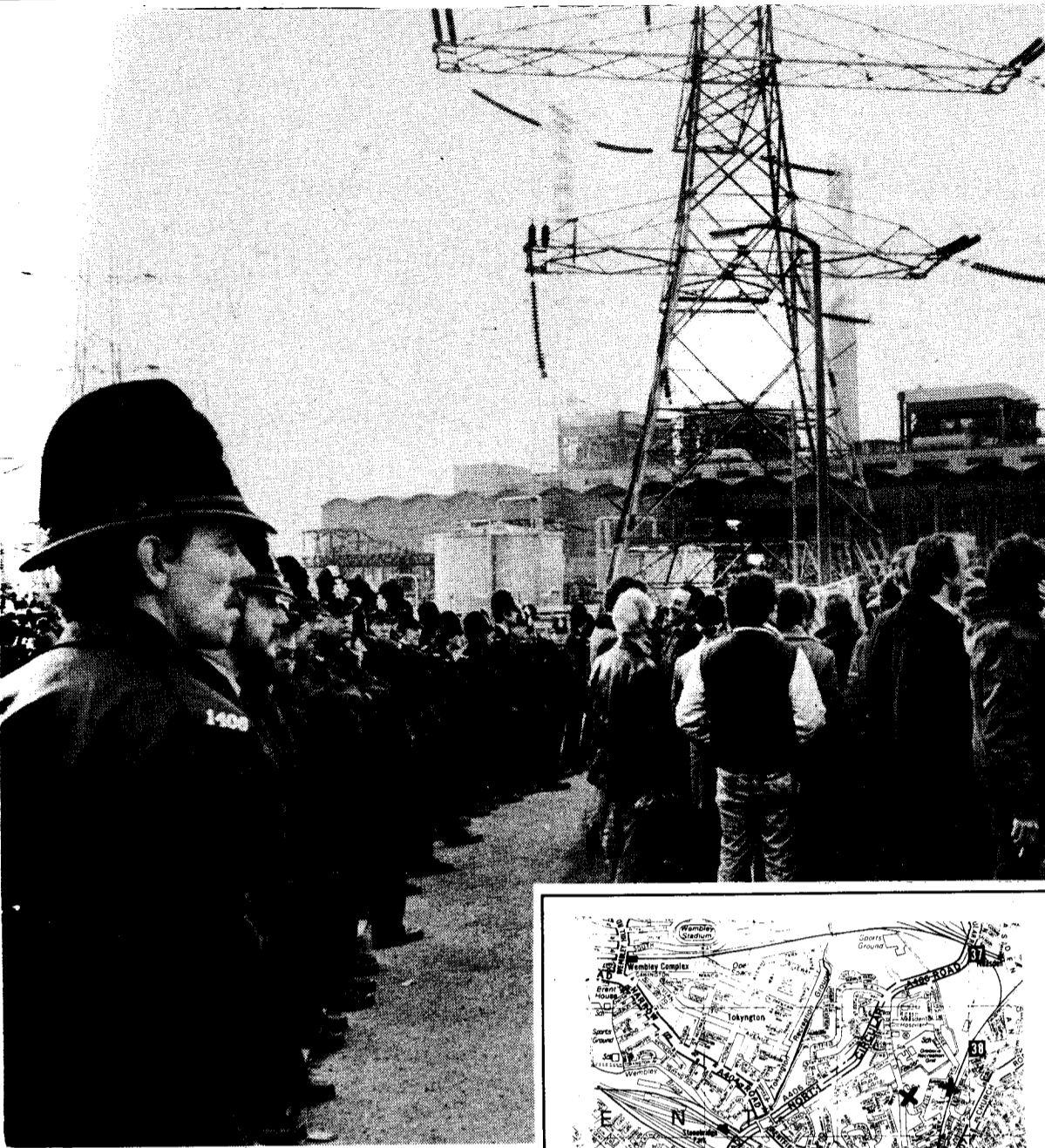
## Help

The Mineworkers Defence Committee can play a role in helping all these developments by co-ordinating the activity of the solidarity movement in co-operation with the NUM.

The committee meeting last Wednesday decided to publish a weekly bulletin. It decided to hold a delegate conference in Sheffield on 26 January and it co-opted members of the Women Against Pit Closures movement, the Black Solidarity movement, area representatives onto its committee.

Phil Holt form the Broad Left Organising Committee was in attendance, as was a comrade from the *Militant* newspaper. The one organisation that continues to remain aloof from the MWDC is the Communist Party, who have not responded to the invitation to send a representative.

Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN



## MASS PICKET

Neasden Power Station,  
Taylors Lane

(Close to North Circular, off Brentfield Road)

**Monday December 17**

BE THERE BY 6am

Called by South East Region TUC.

**'I hope your organisation(s) will endorse our call for a mass picket there on the morning of 17 Dec, and do all in your power to book coaches and achieve a massive turnout. I will be there, as will the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, along with several thousand others.'**

Ken Livingstone

(Secretary, Mineworkers' Defence Committee)

## 'An MP at every picket line'

**THE NATIONAL** Union of Mineworkers is now facing the most critical period of its nine-month strike.

Day by day they are being subjected to a barrage of propaganda from the Thatcher government, the National Coal Board and Tory press.

At the centre of this attack is the lie that miners are responsible for co-ordinated violence on the picket lines.

According to the Tories, the vast majority of miners still on strike are being kept out by sheer physical intimidation.

And during the course of the strike, the Parliamentary Labour Party has allowed the Tories and the media to set the terms of the debate.

But the PLP has a duty to carry out and fight for the official policy of the

Party, decided on by our Annual Conference at Blackpool.

Instead of Labour MPs being dragged into debates about violence, the role of the PLP must be to have an MP on every picket line.

Their job will be to monitor policing methods. This will enable us to rebut each Tory attack on 'picket line violence' with a documented account of police violence.

At the same time, the routine presence of a Labour MP on each picket



By Ken Livingstone

line could itself have a marked effect on the conduct of the police.

This was the case when the London Labour Party regional executive sent a delegation — including

myself — to the picket line at Ollerton, Nottinghamshire.

The excellent report 'State of Siege' serves to show how much could have been done if right from the start of the strike, Labour MPs had been prepared to take on the role of police monitoring.

Given the crucial nature of the miners' strike, not just for the coal industry but for the whole labour and trade union movement, there can be no better use of Labour MPs' time.

The movement must now demand that the PLP immediately allocate our parliamentary representatives so that every NUM picket line is covered by at least one Labour MP.

## Stop oil!

**THE REFUSAL** to handle coal in all the major power stations is having an impact. But the CEGB can still hope to weather the winter months by stopping serious power cuts with the use of oil. The battle to stop oil going into the power stations is crucial for victory.

During the week 19-23 November there were a series of breakdowns reported to the CEGB. In each case it was claimed that they 'had nothing to do with the miners' strike'. But they all occurred in the late afternoon, the time of peak demand for electricity.

Worsley Mains had a power cut for two hours on 21 November. Other cuts were reported at St Helens and Haydock in Lancashire.

## Cuts

In Wales, a different area of Cwmbran had no electricity each day for 3-4 hours in the late afternoon. Llanwern also had power cuts.

In Chesterfield Clay Cross and Ecklington reported 2-3 hour cuts on 23 November.

In Doncaster employers have started a campaign to shut off power for two hours at peak demand time and at Ford Halewood in Merseyside power is actually being switched off during shift changes.

A week ago last Monday workers at the West Thurrock power station in the South East voted not to use the oil from the Japanese Ship that is registered and waiting to be unloaded at the wharf.

This is the kind of action that every group of power station workers needs to emulate. Coal is much more cost effective

than oil. Oil is much more damaging to the environment than coal because oil burnt in power stations increased the sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere causing 'acid rain'.

But oil can be injected at much higher levels than normal to start up the burners, eeking out the stocks of coal already at the power stations.

This is why the antics of David Basnett are such a crime. Rather than calling rallies up and down the country with his members to explain TUC policy of no handling of coal and no use of substitute fuels he has spent his time denouncing miners for picket line violence. What a sniveling coward!

Power workers are taking this action despite David Basnett's lead. They must be supported and boosted in their actions by other trade unionists. Solidarity conferences and meetings should pay special attention to what is going on in the power stations locally and start to organise mass picketing now at any stations where TUC guidelines are not being fully implemented.

The bosses have re-organised the working of the power stations to stop the miners' strike biting. The solidarity movement has to re-organise their activities to focus attention on stopping the use of extra oil.

The CEGB must not be allowed to get away with a winter free from serious power cuts.



# Women march in Cardiff

OVER 1,000 women, children and NUM members marched from the Museum steps in the city centre of Cardiff to an open air rally in Sofia Gardens last Saturday.

The demonstration had a festive atmosphere, balloons abounded, students dressed up as clowns, and a Father Xmas band played to entertain the children and the Saturday shoppers.

The demonstration, called by Cardiff Women Against Pit Closures, was to put the case for coal not dole. Women came from Nottingham, London, Manchester and Yorkshire to join the march and chant the new familiar slogans of the miners' struggle 'We will win' and 'Arthur Scargill we'll support you ever more'.

Uncomplementary chants about Margaret Thatcher were also extremely popular. The rally at the end heard speeches from Anne Scargill, David Ellis Thomas, Nicholas Edwards, Welsh actor Ray Smith from the TV programme *Struggle*, Anne

Clywd MP for the Cynon Valley, Terry Thomas from the NUM and a Greenham speaker and a representative from Lesbian and Gays support the Miners group.

## Hoped

One of the women from the steering committee organising the demonstration told us that the turnout was a little lower than had been hoped for. 'We felt the South Wales NUM could have done more to help us with the event. We know that it was announced in meetings in the coalfields

but when we asked for a room in Transport House for refreshments and a creche we weren't given a positive answer until two days before the demo. We could have done with a lot more help with publicity.'

The spokesperson pointed out that this event was something new for Cardiff. 'There's never been a big women's rally like this in Cardiff to my knowledge and I think the idea took some trade unionists by surprise.'

Overall the day was successful however. The Saturday shoppers got the message. 'Everyone who came down seemed to enjoy themselves', she concluded.

## Greenham anniversary protest

SEVERAL THOUSAND women from all over Britain turned up at Greenham Common on Sunday 9 December for the first anniversary protest since the deployment of Cruise missiles last year.

The action did not mobilise the numbers that have traditionally turned up at the same time over the last three years. Given the formal support given to the Greenham women at the recent CND conference in Sheffield and at many other gatherings over the last year we have the right to ask why the turnout was lower than at previous December actions.

To answer this we have to understand the attitude of women at the camp. Although at first the women staying there seemed to want a protest on that day, and a motion was put and successfully passed at CND conference supporting the women-only action, a change of heart

at the last minute confused many women.

By Ilona Aranovsky

A leaflet was circulated saying that the women at the camp had decided not to call a mass action, but they were glad other

women were taking responsibility for it!

Such a lukewarm approach took the pressure of the CND leaders to build the protest. They were happy instead to concentrate on a protest outside the Soviet Embassy.

Peace activists have to appreciate the tremendous pressures the women at the camp are under. They face the repression of the security forces, the hostility of the Newbury Tories, the hardship of the winter weather. But clear directions to the rest of the women's peace movement are vital if actions called are to be a success.

Women's support groups and women in CND have to continue

supporting the camp on a regular basis. Despite constant evictions the camp has survived.

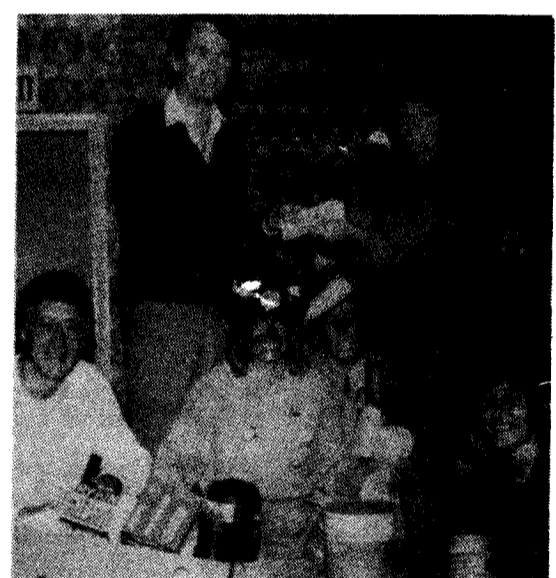
Women regularly enter the base and the link with CND activists through the Cruisewatch telephone tree means that every development of the missiles is being tracked and protests are being organised. Women are particularly needed for the nightwatch during the week.

Following on from the organisation of women at CND conference, who fought for support for Greenham to be upfront on CND's agenda for the next year, the pressure for a democratically organised Women's Conference of CND is on.

Women want to have a forum where we can discuss the way forward for the women's peace movement — for our right to organise at Greenham, for mass actions at Greenham in the spring, to link up with the mixed actions planned at the US bases being prepared for future deployments of cruise missiles.

There's no way we're going to let CND forget the battle against Cruise missiles.

• A meeting at County Hall on Saturday 15 December 2-5pm will discuss co-ordinating practical support from London groups. All women welcome.



The links between Women Against Pit Closures and Greenham have grown throughout the 9 month long strike. Here Anne Thomas (centre), Yvonne Clapham (standing) and Grace Burton from Barnsley Women Against Pit Closures receive the money and food brought back to Yorkshire by Clive Hargreaves (squatting) and Fred Clowery after they visited the camp in September.

## Women's Action Committee AGM

OVER 60 women attended the AGM of the Labour Women's Action Committee in Birmingham last Saturday. They came from Birmingham, Manchester, Scotland and South Wales underlining the progress that WAC has made in building up its support outside London in the last year.

Debate at the conference centred on two main areas — how to fight for more women parliamentary candidates in the coming reselection process, and how to further build up and extend WAC's support in the regions.

In discussing parliamentary candidates everyone present agreed that while women had made tremendous progress in the labour movement, it is around parliamentary candidates that all the prejudices and sexism still rife in the party become most clear.

While many constituencies are now prepared to pay lip-service to the need for women candidates, and often include a woman on their shortlists, in most cases this is as

far as it goes. A white man is still finally selected.

It is particularly a problem for women to win selection for relatively safe seats. It is in the hopeless, unwinnable seats — that the men don't want — that women have most chance of selection.

By Jude Woodward

For black people the situation is even worse, and it was frequently stressed that there should be close collaboration with the black section and other black organisations to ensure that women and blacks are not counterposed in the selection process.

WAC has decided to open a list of women willing to be put forward for the 'b' list of potential can-

didates and is recommending that women get together in the regions to discuss targetting constituencies where women might stand a chance of selection.

Whatever rhetoric successive governments and political parties may engage in, women's real role in society is clearly reflected in the fact that while they are over 50 per cent of the population, they are only around four per cent of MPs.

The role of women in government is a real litmus test of the real position of women in a particular society. The Labour Party, which claims to want to change society, has to show that it is serious by being the first to campaign for more women in parliament.

The discussion on regional organisation registered some real progress over the last year, with area and regional groups of WAC beginning to meet in Greater Man-

chester, Scotland and Birmingham. But the biggest gains were registered in South Wales where candidates for the regional women's committee supported by WAC shook the hold of one of the most traditional and anti-feminist women's committees in the country.

In the West Midland, despite late organisation WAC supporters campaigning for an alternative candidate came within a handful of votes of unseating Ann Davis on the national women's committee.

Alongside adopting new rules to establish proper regional organisations of WAC there was also discussion on how WAC nationally could aid the process of building up regional support.

Key to this were the decisions taken in relation to the WAC bulletin. It was agreed that the regularity and thrust of the bulletin should be changed

to make it more use to women in the constituencies and women's sections.

It is hoped that the bulletin will give WAC a more public profile in the women's sections and encourage women to join and become active in WAC itself.

Finally, campaigning this year will again focus on the issue of the women's section of the NEC. It was agreed that WAC will campaign for the same slate as last year, but that it will also fight for the women's conference to organise 'shadow elections' for the women's section of the NEC so that in future the slate will have the authority of the women's conference behind it.

The AGM set WAC off on a campaigning footing for 1985, now as many women as possible should get involved to make sure that next year is another year of advance and success.

## Don't touch their money

THE following statement appeared recently in all the major newspapers in Luxembourg in support of the National Union of Mineworkers.

'THE ATTEMPT by the British courts to seize the British miners' funds, and thus to try and break their resistance so as to finish once and for all the strike which has already lasted for 10 months, is an outrage.

It will unleash solidarity action with the striking miners over the channel all over Europe.

Three major European trade unions — German, Dutch and Belgian — have this weekend decided to do everything possible to limit the export of coal to Britain.

In Luxembourg, where young European trade unionists met last week and have already made collections for their British colleagues, we of the Young FNCTFEL (Youth section of the Railwayworkers) solidarise with the NUM and demand that the British courts are not allowed to touch the NUM's belongings in Luxembourg.'

The statement went on to point out that capitalist firms and governments, even military dictatorships, could leave their money in banks in Luxembourg without any risk of it being touched. Why was a different rule to be applied to the NUM? It urged trade unionists to step up donations to the strikers.

# Marxism in the middle

**THE SPLIT** in the Communist Party has speeded up dramatically over the last few weeks. On 23 November the Communist Party Executive ruled that the London Party congress was not entitled to elect a new district committee. On 4 December Gordon McLennan, Communist Party General Secretary, attempted to close the London congress and then led a walk out.

On 30 November 22 leading Communist Party members in London were suspended — and three full time workers sacked. All had supported the line of the *Morning Star* against the Eurocommunists of *Marxism Today* and the party executive.

But the divisions within the Communist Party have been immediately caught up in, and mirrored, a much wider process of realignment and recomposition which is taking place in the labour movement. JOHN ROSS looks at one of the fundamental processes taking place: the emergence of a current which now likes to term itself the 'broad left'.

Apart from *Marxism Today* it is the *New Statesman* which is the most widely read journal which has completely understood the significance of the crisis in the Communist Party for the labour movement as a whole. In a series of articles the *New Statesman's* deputy editor, Sarah Benton, has been attempting to forge an explicit alliance between the Eurocommunist wing of the Communist Party and Neil Kinnock's supporters in the Labour Co-ordinating Committee.

Writing following a public debate between *Marxism Today* and the LCC in London in the 10 February issue of *New Statesman* Benton wrote that: the purpose of the debate was to wheel into public view the new axis that has formed on the left. Organisationally, the axis runs from the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (a soft left grouping within the Labour Party) to the middle of the Communist Party. This is not a very great distance. But such an axis puts both the LCC and the 'eurocommunists' in a stronger position for their separate fights for dominance in their own parties.

Supporters of this *Marxism Today*/LCC axis have since christened themselves the 'broad left'. Major articles which outline the self views of this current are, for example, Jon Bloomfield's 'Crossed lines: Communists in search of an identity' in *Marxism Today* for April 1984, Sarah Benton's 'The left re-aligns' in *New Statesman* 30 November, and Beatrix Campbell's 'Politics, pyramids — and people' in *Marxism Today* for December 1984.

Benton wrote what she considered to be the defining features of this 'broad left' in her original *New Statesman* article of 10 February. She stated that *Marxism Today* and the LCC, in contrast to others on the left, were agreed that:

1. Labour suffered a crushing defeat at the last election from which it will not automatically recover.
2. Women pose an unavoidable political problem.
3. Tony Benn is no longer the standardbearer of the Left, and has taken himself beyond the pale of political influence.
4. 'Democracy' is a more potent keyword than 'equality'.
5. Any political strategy must continue to acknowledge the centrality of the Labour Party as the mass party of the working class.
6. Winning popular support for basic socialist policies is more important than winning a party branch

majority for more esoteric ones.

A large part of this list is of course fake. There are far greater forces on the left than the LCC/*Marxism Today* (to say the least!) who believe that 'women pose an unavoidable political problem' — which is a very curious way of stating the decisive importance of the struggle for women's liberation. It would also be an idiot who failed to realise that 'Labour suffered a crushing defeat at the last election from which it will not automatically recover' etc.

But behind the smokescreens the operative part of Benton's list was clear — namely that 'Tony Benn is no longer the standardbearer of the Left, and has taken himself beyond the pale of political influence.'

The counterposition which Benton and *Marxism Today* make to their own LCC/*Marxism Today* axis is a so called 'fundamentalist left' — defined by Benton as, 'the erstwhile "stalinists" of the CP, various groupings from the old Trotskyist Left... and Labour's traditional fundamentalist Left, including Tony Benn and the group around *Labour Herald* (i.e. Ted Knight, Ken Livingstone, and Matthew Wharburton).'

This view that what used to be termed the 'Bennite' left must be eliminated or marginalised in the labour movement does in fact unite the *Marxism Today*/LCC/*New Statesman* axis. The difference between the forces involved is simply on how this marginalisation should be achieved.

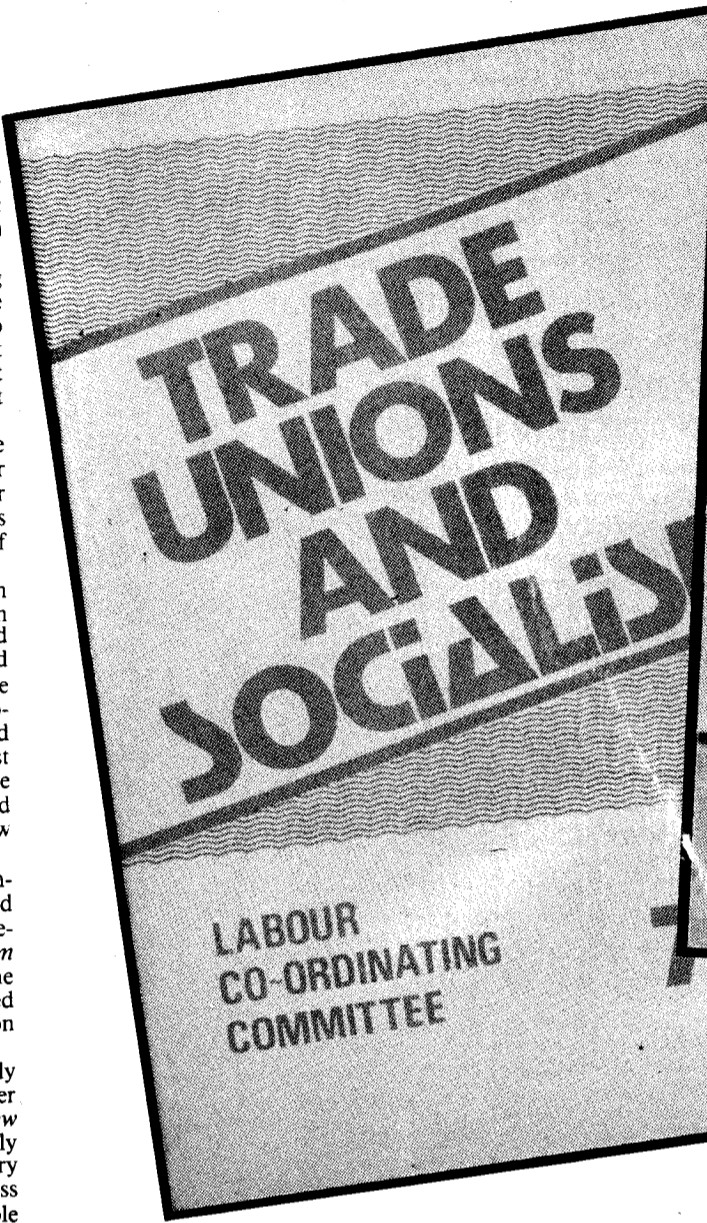
The crudest, and most explicitly right wing version has come from Peter Kellner, the political editor of the *New Statesman*. Kellner is perfectly prepared to accept as necessary crushing defeats of the working class movement provided this will enable forces of the 'fundamentalist left' to be eliminated.

Thus writing in the *New Statesman* of 16 November, under the title 'why Labour's leadership is wrong about Scargill', Kellner concludes:

as some sectarian Left papers are now pointing out — there is a fundamental difference between the positions of the NUM leadership and that of the Labour Party leadership... Mr Kinnock and Mr Scargill represent political positions that are ultimately incompatible. For those



Beatrix Campbell



# Who are the

## The real alliance

What holds together the LCC/*Marxism Today*/*New Statesman* forces, and their unity in the dream ticket with the Labour right, is that the social alliance they propose is precisely an alliance with significant sections of the bourgeoisie.

This is of course most open and completely explicit with *Marxism Today* — which is precisely why *Marxism Today* is the ideologically leading force within the entire coalition in the labour movement it proposes.

The core of *Marxism Today's* politics is the 'anti-Thatcher alliance' — an alliance which explicitly takes in the SDP/Liberal Alliance and other bourgeois forces. This particular project of this alliance is carried through in the pages of *Marxism Today* with audacity, verve, consistency and determination.

This projected coalition in turn is only a particular version of the 'broad democratic alliance' of the Communist Party's *British Road to Socialism* — an

alliance so named precisely because it takes in an alliance with a significant section of the bourgeoisie. Contrary to the title of the Communist Party's programme this is not an alliance for socialism at all but an alliance for a 'democratic' stage of advance which is quite explicitly not defined as socialist.

This strategy, as Eric Hobsbawm repeatedly stresses, is explicitly based on the Popular Front line of the 1935 Seventh Congress of the Communist International — the congress organised by Stalin and stage managed by Dimitrov.

The fundamental difference on this field between *Marxism Today* and the *Morning Star* is not over whether to orient to an alliance with the bourgeoisie. It is over which section of the bourgeoisie should be allied with — and on what terms such an alliance with capital should be concluded.

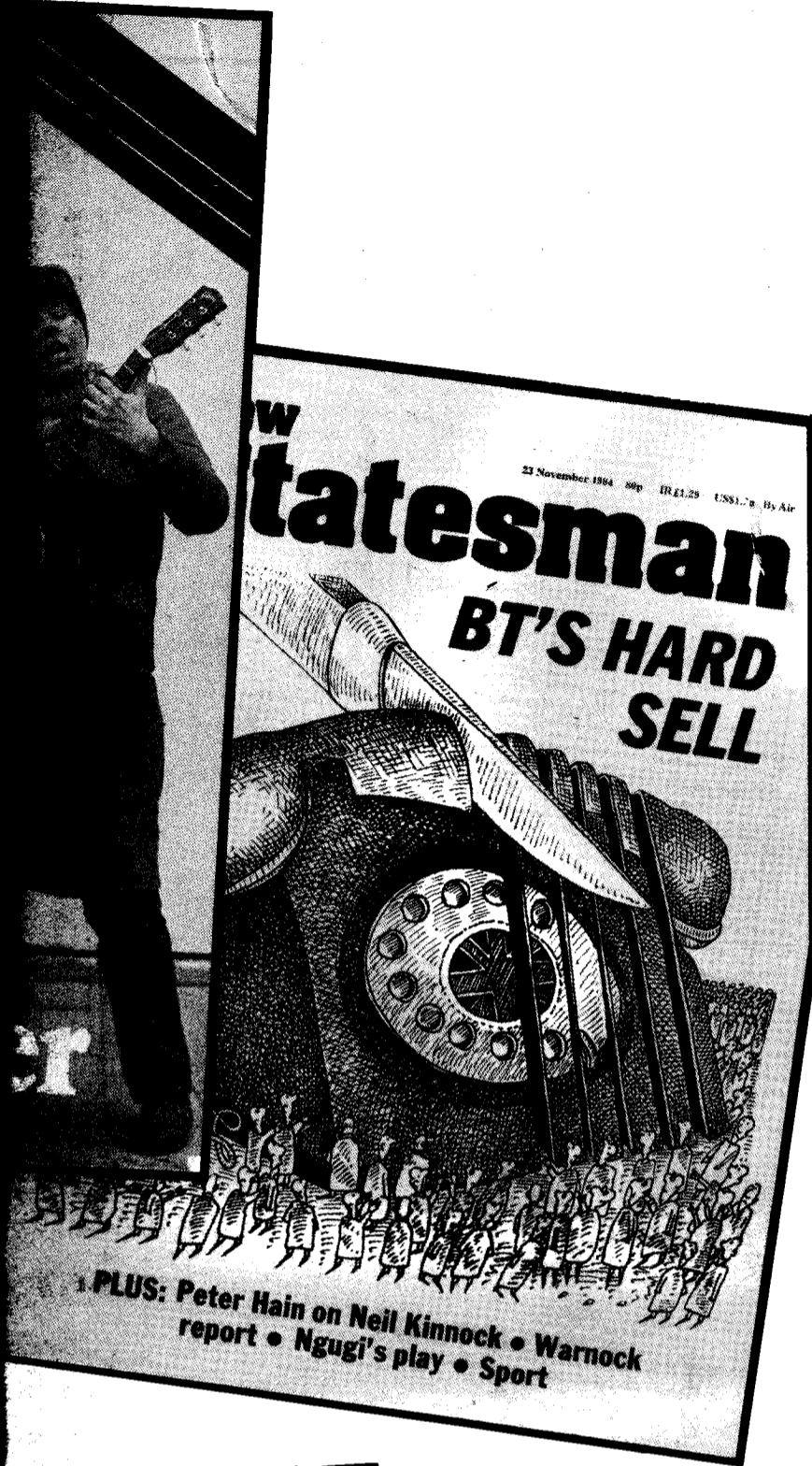
*Marxism Today* is oriented to the 'modernising' pro-EEC sections of the bourgeoisie — which is why it consistently prints articles by Bob Rowthorn and others opposing the

Communist Party's official line of opposition to Common Market membership. It draws its forces from the same milieu as the *Guardian*, sections of the Liberals, the SDP and those who basically think Britain should be moved in the direction of a modern capitalist state on the model of West Germany or Sweden.

### EEC

The *Morning Star* in contrast, following the official line of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, is oriented to supposedly 'patriotic' sections of the bourgeoisie who are opposed not merely to the United States but also to the EEC. As this latter section of capital today scarcely exists — and even the *Morning Star* cannot follow through the coherent logic, which would be to link up with Enoch Powell (!) — the *Morning Star* maintains its extraordinary mangy, dog eared quality of being suspended in mid air. The forces to which the *Morning Star* is oriented are actually the least dynamic sections of the entire ruling class and cannot possibly compete with the 'modernising', pro-EEC sectors to which *Marxism Today* is oriented.

The support for an alliance with significant sections of British capitalism directly links *Marxism Today* to the *New Statesman*. The *New Statesman* has been attempting consistently to create an agreed economic basis for an alliance with capital in a whole series of articles in its pages on



on the Left who wish to see Mr Kinnock as Prime Minister it is important now for Mr Scargill to be defeated.

Kellner then goes on to add the supposed qualification that he wishes, 'that defeat to be inflicted not by the coal board or the government "beating" the miners but by the miners themselves deflating their President.'

But that is wholly meaningless. If the miners win their demands and strike Arthur Scargill will win. The only way Scargill can be defeated is if the miners are defeated. What Kellner is in fact saying is that it would be preferable for the miners to be defeated so that Scargill can be defeated — as several correspondents to the *New Statesman* pointed out.

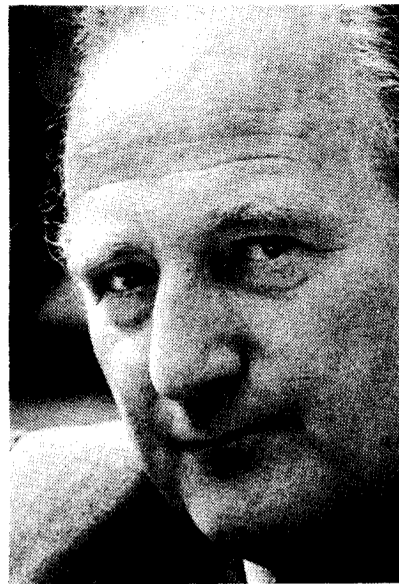
Other forces in the LCC/*Marxism Today* axis have a very different political and tactical approach. Peter Hain, vice chair of the LCC, has strongly supported the miners strike and publically criticised Neil Kinnock for his failure to do so. Hain has also criticised Kinnock's explicit alliance with the right wing on the NEC and inside the parliamentary party. Hain has instead proposed an alternative series of alliances.

Writing in the *New Statesman* of 23 November, under the title 'What's Neil up to?' Hain writes:

'He (Kinnock) now needs close links with leaders of the Transport and General Workers Union, NUPE and the National Union of Railwayworkers — who with others constitute a powerful new trade union left. He cannot continue to rely on the centre-right of the NEC to the exclusion of potential left-wing allies lies Michael Meacher, Tom Sawyer and David Blunkett.'

Notable in this list however are the absences. Among the list of trade union allies was not included the NUM — nor its representative Eric Clarke. Among the NEC allies were not included Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Joan Maynard, Audrey Wise or Eric Heffer — who are among the most notable leaders of the Labour left and completely unequivocal supporters of the miners' strike.

In short while Kellner calls for the Bennite left to be crushed by open assault. Hain argues for it to be marginalised by the formation of a new 'inside left'



Gordon McLennan

Photo: GM COOKSON

alliance. The methods are totally different — and we would not equate Hain's politics with Kellner's — but the goal, the weakening or destruction of what used to be termed the 'Bennite left' is the same.

The Communist Party side of this 'broad left' current was explained by *Marxism Today* editor Martin Jacques in his November report to the CP executive. Analysing the situation at the Labour Party conference, Jacques noted, 'One of the things that struck me forcibly... was, from a number of different angles, the role of the Party (the Communist Party — JR) in this context.'

Firstly, negatively speaking, there was the weakness, or virtual absence indeed in many fringe activities (which are of a peculiar importance to a Labour Party conference) of a broad left position in respect either to the moralistic/ideological leftism (the 'fundamentalist' left — JR) described earlier, or the right. The broad left in the Labour Party remains very weak, and essentially a pragmatic rather than a worked out, theoretically based

strategic position. How these debates lacked the input of a communist perspective!

Jacques conclusion was that: 'we need to find more points of political contact and intervention with the Labour Party.'

A similar sustained attempt to present what she considers to be the basis of a 'fundamentalist left/broad left' division has come from Beatrix Campbell. Typical expressions of Campbell's views on this may be found in a major interview she conducted with Tony Benn in *City Limits* in January, and again in the debate with Ken Livingstone at this year's *Left Alive* event sponsored by the Communist Party and which is reprinted in December's *Marxism Today*.

Campbell argues that what we are witnessing today, in addition to the new projected axis of the LCC/*Marxism Today* 'broad left' is: 'the new sectarian alliance which crosses the boundaries of the far left, the Communist Party and the Labour Party.'

## Left

According to Campbell what we are seeing is, 'another alliance happening somewhere else, between the old Trotskyist far left, the Labour Party hard left, and sectarians within the Communist Party.'

Campbell argues that for these latter forces, 'the very idea of alliances confuses and disturbs them.'

Campbell is indeed right on one issue, the question of choice of social alliances is at the very core of the present recomposition in the labour movement — perhaps its most central point. But Campbell gets totally wrong what are the terms of the debate — and therefore assigns the so called 'fundamentalist' pro-*Morning Star* grouping within the Communist Party to quite the wrong 'camp'. However by examining the issue of social alliances we can outline very clearly the real lines of divide on the left and in the labour movement.

# ★ Morning Star

INCORPORATING THE DAILY WORKER—FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM

# the 'broad left'?

ature Labour Party policy. These consistently stress that it is urgent for Labour to explicitly support an incomes policy and that a direct goal of such a policy must be to increase pro-

Thus in the 7 December issue of *New Statesman* Doug Jones, economic assistant to Roy Hattersley, writes: 'At present relatively high levels of profitability are probably necessary... Planned incomes policy would certainly help in that direction.' Jones however goes on to pose the 'problem' that why should workers want to help build profits rather than bolster their wages.'

## June

On the political level orientation of the *New Statesman* to an alliance, with political representatives of capital, and therefore the clearest basis of its convergence with *Marxism Today*, was set out at the June 1983 election. Here the *New Statesman* called for 'the hope of an election result leading to an anti-hatcher coalition,' and urged a vote for Liberal or Scottish National Party candidates, and not Labour, in 28 specific constituencies.

The same line was expressed following the election by EP Thompson in a remote article in the *New Statesman* (4 June) arguing, 'the situation, generally, in the final days of the election, could have favoured the strategy of a 'popular front' of peace and anti-hatcher forces.'

But if the basis for the alliance between *Marxism Today* and the *New*

*Statesman* is rather clear there might appear to be a contradiction concerning the LCC. The latter organisation is today quite explicitly against an alliance of Labour with the SDP-Liberals. Therefore, it might appear, the LCC does not fit within a framework seeking an alliance with capital. Perhaps *Marxism Today's* wooing is likely to be in vain?

## LCC

But such an analysis would be based on a misunderstanding. The LCC's spokespersons are against an alliance with specific political representatives of capital — namely the SDP-Liberal Alliance.

They are not against an alliance with sections of capital as such. On the contrary Peter Hain in his *The Democratic Alternative*, while arguing against any alliance with SDP/Liberals, states explicitly

*Labour's strategy is dependent on winning the support of significant sections of capital... it would be wrong to see the whole capitalist system as engaged in a gigantic conspiracy. Contradictions and conflicts run through our system, as is clear from the twists and turns of the CBI leadership.*

It is by no means automatic that a radical industrial strategy would immediately face complete hostility from all manufacturers, especially those reeling from the effects of severe and prolonged deflation. It might also be possible to win the



Peter Hain

support of progressive sections of management, some small business owners, cooperatives, sections of the civil service and public sector managers. (page 73, our emphasis) LCC supporter Geoff Hodgson, in his *Labour at the Crossroads* and other

works, has also argued for the necessity and possibility for Labour to forge an alliance with significant sectors of capital.

It is this analysis of course which gives to *Marxism Today* the whip hand in any discussion within the self styled 'broad left'. For Hain's position just amounts to a form of inconsistent ultra-left syndicalism. Leave aside a few 'small business owners, cooperatives, sections of the civil service' etc — who are merely secondary issues — then if it is necessary to form an alliance with sections of capital, indeed if 'Labour's strategy is dependent on winning the support of significant sections of capital', it is ridiculous to propose such an alliance solely in the economic sphere and refuse to enter into an alliance, a coalition if you like, with the political representatives of capital.

Martin Jacques is entirely correct. The LCC/Kinnock's position in the so called 'broad left', its opposition to any deal with the SDP-Liberal Alliance is purely pragmatic — as is Neil Kinnock's in essence. This is precisely why the Kinnockite's opposition could collapse at any fundamental setback for his current project — a setback such as Labour defeat at the next election.

*Marxism Today's* project of an orientation towards 'significant sections of capital' on the contrary is theoretically grounded and it is prepared to draw out all the implications — as opposed to the relative eclecticism of Hain/Kinnock. This is precisely why despite the fact that it is

the LCC/Kinnock/'broad left' of the Labour Party that has the forces it is actually *Marxism Today* which has the political edge in the entire current.

Finally, therefore, we may see what is the real nature of this entire 'broad left' current. The social alliance it proposes is one with significant sections of capital itself. It differs — and they are genuine tactical differences — simply on the terms, and with which sectors of capital, such an alliance should be constructed. Its opposition, naturally, is vehemently directed against anyone who poses an alternative alliance to that with capital.

It is also clear why the *Morning Star* has no place within those forces which constitute what *Marxism Today* chooses to call the 'fundamentalist left'. For the core of the position of 'fundamentalists' is not that they reject social alliances — that lunatic positions is reserved for a few ultra-left sectarians. The core of the coherent 'fundamentalist' position is that they propose an alliance of the exploited and oppressed independent of, and against, capital.

The *Morning Star* belongs with the camp of *Marxism Today* in the final analysis — and their common point of reference in the Seventh, Stalin/Dimotrov Congress of the Comintern. Both *Marxism Today* and the *Morning Star* in fact quite explicitly claim this as their key point of reference.

As to the real core of an alternative position that has its origin in a completely different tradition — that of an alliance of the oppressed and exploited against capital.

IN Socialist Action 78 John Ross outlined that the present period of world politics saw the development of revolutionary situations in a number of semi-colonial countries — most notably in Central America. In the imperialist countries however the much greater strength of the imperialist ruling classes meant that we were not confronted with revolutionary struggles for power of the type which existed in a number of semi-colonial countries.

PHIL HEARSE and BOB PENNINGTON present an alternative view. |

LIN PIAO is alive and well, and writing in the pages of Socialist Action. Or at least so it would appear from the centre-spread 'How Reagan will be defeated' (SA 78) by John Ross. In this he expounds the typically Maoist view that the key struggles in the world will be, for the foreseeable future, fought out in the semi-colonial countries.

Ross grants that the working class in the advanced capitalist countries 'will strike the final blow' against imperialism, but that is put off to the indefinite future. The slaves in the city, it appears, will eventually cut their masters' throats, but the key thing in the foreseeable future is that the city itself is besieged by the insurgent masses from the countryside.

Anyone who thinks otherwise is 'fixated by Europe' and obsessed by the 'white working class'.

John Ross justifies his perspective by saying that it conforms with the 'entire logic of development' of capitalism in the 20th century. For him, the contradictions in the imperialist system have lain at its centre, but the struggles have broken out at the periphery of the imperialist system because of the weakness of the ruling class at the periphery, compared with the strength of the ruling class at the centre.

Historically, Ross's schema is incorrect. In the 20th century the European working class has played a most revolutionary role. Numerous pre-revolutionary crises have developed; several fully fledged revolutionary

crises and insurrections have occurred. That the European revolution has not conquered any victories, other than those achieved by the Red Army and by the CP in Yugoslavia, is a function not of the 'strength' of the imperialist bourgeoisie, but of the betrayals of the reformist and Stalinist working class bureaucracy. The defeat of the German revolution, of the Spanish revolution, and of the revolutionary wave in Italy, France and Greece after 1945 were due primarily to the role of Stalinist counter-revolution.

The strength of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy in the imperialist countries is not simply a function of the strength of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Neither were the

defeats of the European revolution simply inevitable consequences of the strength of the ruling class. On the contrary, the victory of revolution was objectively possible, given revolutionary leadership.

John Ross reduces the question of working class leadership purely and simply to the actions of the bourgeoisie, rather than seeing it also as a consequence of the outcome of political struggle inside the working class.

He merely collapses the subjective factor into the objective situation. No wonder he reaches the most profoundly pessimistic conclusions about the class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries.

# Lin Piao lives!



Chou En-Lai and Mao Tse-tung. In the 1960s, Chinese leadership advanced theory of 'countryside surrounding the cities'

These struggles, like the British miners' strike, the German struggle over the 35-hour week and the Italian fight to keep the sliding scale of wages will be vital for the outcome of imperialism's offensive. So will be the struggle against US imperialism's attempt to foist deepening militarisation on Europe.

The whole organised strength, the basic social gains, of the European working class are under attack. If the attack is successful, it will be a colossal defeat for all the enemies of imperialism, including in the semi-colonial countries.

It is excluded that the imperialist offensive against the European working class can be successful without gigantic class battles, up to and including struggles of general strike proportions, which begin to pose the question of power. To say otherwise, is to say the European working class will go down to defeat without a struggle.

While lecturing his readers about the unity of world economics and world politics in the epoch of imperialism, John Ross is in fact establishing a hierarchy of tasks for the world revolution, and giving priority to the struggle in the semi-colonial countries.

In fact, the logical conclusion of his position would be to make the task of international solidarity work with the colonial revolution the decisive task of revolutionaries. Naturally, it is difficult for John Ross to actually say such a preposterous thing in the middle of the miners' strike, but that is the logic of his position nonetheless.

John Ross concludes that US imperialism will be defeated 'by a whole range of class struggle ... internationally'. For that particular piece of strategic insight, I'm sure we're all very grateful. Indeed, the success of imperialism's offensive against the world working class will only be defeated by a succession of struggles — both in the advanced capitalist countries and in the semi-colonial countries.

Moreover (let us not forget it), the struggle against Stalinism in the deformed workers' states will also have a vital bearing on the outcome. That is the viewpoint of world economics, world politics, the permanent revolution and Trotskyism. John Ross's viewpoint, on the contrary, is a lifeless and abstract schema which can only disorientate revolutionaries.

## Revolt in Paradise

NEW CALEDONIA is a French colony. The Kanaks form 42 per cent of the population living on native reservations while the white population grows fat from the land once owned by them.

On 21 November, three days after a new government had been elected for the territory dominated by the whites, Kanaks led by FLNKS (the Front for National and Socialist Liberation for Kanaks) announced the establishment of a provisional government. Their aim was to lay the basis for a 'future state of Kanaky'.

In pursuance of their demands for independence they began to occupy the white territory, erecting barricades to block off the roads and kidnapping the sub-prefect, Jean-Claude Demar.

The Mitterrand government in France has been unable to do a deal with the Kanaks and major divisions are opening up in the French establishment as how to solve this crisis. The report below is based on an article by Claude Gabriel and Jean Jacques Laredo in the French newspaper Rouge.

The press have attempted to portray the Kanak's fight for independence as a band of savages on

the warpath. This is designed to divert attention away from the cause of the revolt.

French Caledonia has launched continual attacks on the Kanaks, stealing their land, practising rampant racism and, in September 1981, assassinating independence leader Pierre Declercq.

The success of the recent election boycott, where 80 per cent of the Kanak population stayed away from the polls, strengthened the hand of the FLNKS.

Their demands for the release of all activists imprisoned during the election period and for a declaration making the elections null and void were backed up by the only protest actions available to a rural population confined to native reservations.

Actions were taken which directed the anger of the Kanaks against the white colonists. The 'Caldoches' lands were occupied and 'their' roads blockaded.

This forced the Lemoine government to make its first retreat. They accepted the possibility of dissolving the Territorial Assembly and holding a referendum in 1986.

This shows that the authorities are not in control of the situation. They wish to diffuse the revolt with promises of a transition to independence.

The argument they use to deny independence to the Kanaks is that they



FLNKS union federation

are a minority. If this is true it is only the case because of the settlement policy stepped up at the beginning of the seventies.

It is a formal agreement presented as a screen to hide their real reason for opposing the Kanaks right to their land. The Caldoche population wants to keep control of what it has stolen — the raw materials such as nickel as well as the advantages of the island's position in the Pacific for trade.

The authorities claim that the Kanaks' demand for a referendum on self-determination, in which only the Kanaks participate, is racist. This is a lie. The founding Congress of the

Front clearly stated that 'the country will remain open to all those who accept Kanak sovereignty'.

Pierre Declercq himself was white. What the colonial administration opposes is anything that undermines the legal status of the French presence in the colonies.

The colonial administration has traditionally used religion and local customs to induce the Kanaks to respect their rule. It aims to break up the unity of this new independence movement with schemes to neocolonial independence that would leave French interests untouched. An operation similar to the one the

French imperialists carried out in Africa in the 1950s.

The Lemoine government has a fine line to tread. On the one hand there is the pressure in France of the colonists and the bourgeois opposition parties who want a hard line defence of colonial interests.

On the other side there is the program of the FLNKS which is adamant that only the Kanaks should decide the future of the territory.

When it sends a former director general of the national police to negotiate with the FLNKS you can see that the government is not sure of the way ahead.



LAST WEEK'S meeting of NATO defence ministers took one of the most momentous decisions in western policy for many years. The meeting agreed to the US army doctrine of Follow-On-Forces Attack (FOFA) — the plan for deep strikes into Eastern Europe as part of a new offensive strategy for NATO in central Europe. Even more menacing, the US representatives at the meeting were still not satisfied: they want a deep strike capability that will reach into the Western regions of the USSR, according to Sunday's *Observer*.

OLIVER MACDONALD looks at what lies behind the new key NATO military decisions.

Rather desperate and largely successful efforts have been made by the government to keep the significance of last week's NATO decisions hidden from the public. Questions in Parliament about it have met with silence on the ground that all is 'confidential'. How come? Because if people here knew the implications of what is being decided, they would recognise that the 'threat' in Europe is not a Russian but an American one.

We need to remind ourselves of the developments in Europe over the last 18 months. First Cruise and Pershing begin to arrive — first strike weapons against the USSR. At the same time, the US military HQ for Europe is being moved from Germany to Britain. Then, at the 14 May NATO Defence Council Meeting, the European states finally agree to the principle of Emerging Technology (ET) weapons — so called conventional systems designed for use in new offensive tactics. Now we have FOFA — the war-fighting doctrine to tie all these things together.

## FOFA

Finally, the US is pushing for FOFA to be supplemented by the "Airland Battle" doctrine of the US army — combining deep strikes in the enemy rear with very rapid ground advance and the immediate use of integrated nuclear, chemical and conventional systems. The US army used its rapid advance technique in NATO 'Operation Lionheart' during the autumn and the West German army has signed an agreement with the US Army over Airland Battle.

All this would be dynamite to public opinion here if it were known through the mass media. That's one big reason for the cover up.

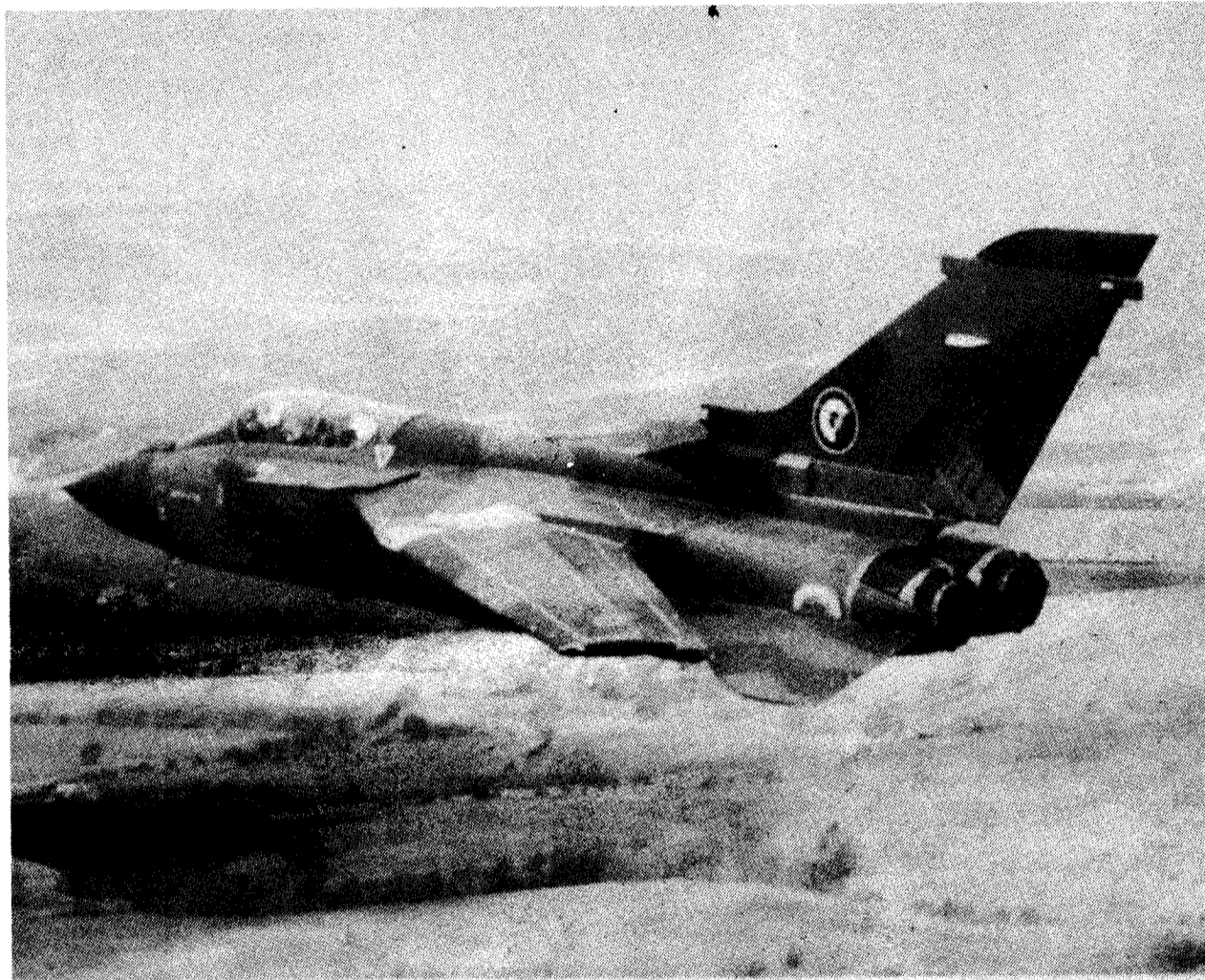
The second reason for the cover-up is the fact that a number of West European officials are themselves terrified of the American push in these directions. They are trying to argue against them and for that reason they must keep things secret: it is a cardinal sin in NATO debates to mobilise public opinion against the US.

The public relations declarations on ET and deep strikes from NATO commander General Rodgers has been that all this will lessen the alliance's dependence on nuclear weapons. This is a lie — as Tory Defence Minister John Nott explained way back in December 1982 when the US first raised these ideas in NATO, and before the Europeans realised how determined the Americans were about them.

Nott told the *Financial Times*'s respected Defence correspondent Bridget Bloom (12 December 1982): 'West European governments view the growing debate with some concern. There has been an element of misrepresentation in suggestions that the new technology ... could help NATO rely less on nuclear weapons.'

The Tory NATO expert Julian Critchley MP has similarly indicated his opposition to FOFA in a few cryptic lines at the end of a *Guardian* 'Agenda' page article this autumn.

But the only public explanations allowed for publication in the mass media here as to why ET and FOFA may be a bad thing are such purely



Tornado attack aircraft of NATO forces

technical reasons as the high cost of ET, dependence on US supplies of ET weapons, FOFA's technical unreliability, and the fact that new Soviet battle tactics along the central European front make FOFA irrelevant in the event of a Soviet attack — so-called second echelon (second line) Soviet forces will be already deployed forward for attack.

The only half-way serious article in the mass media on the threat of FOFA was a piece by Robin Cook in the *Times* last week. He pointed out that the US army manuals on FOFA call it a *Blitzkrieg* strategy — the Nazi term for their surprise attack aggressive thrusts in Europe. But Cook also seems to have missed the point of the new strategy, thinking that since it is aimed at East European targets it will be counter-productive as it will only strengthen the unity of the Warsaw Pact in the event of war.

To find the real threat posed by FOFA we must turn to Mr. C. Bertram, the recently retired Director of the British Institute for Strategic Studies, being interviewed not by the British media but by *Nouvel Observateur* in peace-movement-free France on 13 January, 1984.

## Europe

Bertram stated: 'I think Europeans should temper their enthusiasm for this project (ET and FOFA) ... The idea of an invasion of the West by the forces of the East is becoming less and less believable.'

'What is the scenario of a possible war in Europe at the end of the 1980s?

In my opinion, it is that of a phenomenon of contagion stemming from a crisis that explodes in one or more countries of the East and that degenerates into war. What is the best military means to manage such a crisis? Certainly not a strategy which demands from the start deep strike against the enemy.

'It is necessary to be very prudent in the decisions which will be taken from now until 1990 for Europe's defence. It is certainly not a matter, in order to deter an already improbable attack, of endowing ourselves with an arsenal which will transform every even localised crisis into a general conflict.'

Speaking here is the head of the main establishment think tank of the British Armed Forces. Naturally he, like Robin Cook, assumed merely that the US administration is making an intellectual error — they somehow assume that the leaders of the greatest military force the world has ever seen are idiots and morons.

This type of British anti-Americanism should be rejected by the Left. We have no reason whatsoever to believe that the present US leadership, which can run rings around its 'allies' in Western Europe, is a bunch of ignorant hicks. We must assume that they know what they're doing in what Robin Cook calls 'a fundamental shift in NATO's strategy'.

In reality such a military shift implies a shift of political strategy. Since 1956, US real policy towards Eastern Europe gradually evolved away from Dulles' notion of grabbing Eastern

Europe out of the grip of the USSR towards using Eastern Europe as a lever for changing the economic and political system of the USSR itself. West Germany's — and indeed NATO's — official political aims still continued to explicitly reject the frontiers of Eastern Europe and to allow for the possible liquidation of Poland through a return to Germany's 1937 frontiers.

## East

But the East-West treaties of 1970-72 brought official recognition of the post-war frontiers and the 'Sonnenfeldt' doctrine of accepting Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. As far as NATO policy was concerned all this simply made public what had long been the US's real policy. Finally this policy corresponded to NATO's military posture in Central Europe.

With Reagan there has been a new stated change in the policy of the US towards Eastern Europe. The US Secretary of State Schultz has repeatedly declared, even in the official framework of the Stockholm conference earlier this year, that the US rejects Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe. The fact that he argued this two days after Reagan began his 'peace candidate' public relations job shows that the US meant it.

Does this mean the US wants war to grab Eastern Europe? Of course not. The US does not want war today — and Hitler certainly never wanted it with the West in 1939. The United

States wants to achieve its political aims through the *threat of victory* in the event of war. It is a matter of *diplomacy through military superiority*.

The US arms build-up makes the USSR put increasing pressure on East European budgets in response — as is happening now. The US's economic war against the USSR, and against some of its allies in Eastern Europe creates growing internal strains and centrifugal tendencies in the East European Bloc.

An explosion occurs in this or that country — or an East European regime fearing an explosion produced by economic crisis tries to leave the bloc in the hope of massive Western economic assistance. Soviet threats to intervene militarily are countered by US threats of deep strikes against Soviet units both in the country concerned and in Western Ukraine and Belorussia. The Soviets back down, the bloc breaks apart, NATO surges forward. That is the scenario with which the United States is now playing.

## Labour

As far as the labour movement is concerned, we must be crystal clear on two issues concerning Eastern Europe — otherwise we will be completely disoriented by the new NATO strategy. The present system of Soviet hegemony, and the resulting authoritarian-bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe in no way satisfy the aspirations of the populations of Eastern Europe. But at the same time, Reaganite military pressure, never mind a US-West German inspired military strike against Eastern Europe, will carry the peoples of that half of the continent towards annihilation, not liberation. Any solution to the problems of Eastern Europe will not come from the US army.

Secondly, the West European establishments' readiness to be dragged along by the Reaganites is a classic example of *appeasement*. The West European state establishments are incapable of resisting this anti-Soviet military build-up, despite the threat that it poses to their own state security because to do so would involve repudiating the 'Soviet menace' and to do that in turn would mean creating chaos in their own domestic politics, chaos especially in the parties of the Right.

At present Labour has no policy alternative to the new US politico/military strategy. It has phraseology about the simultaneous disbandment of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but at the same time the real commitment of PLP leaders to increasing Britain's spending on conventional forces in Europe, justified by the supposed need to 'balance' the 'Soviet threat' in central Europe.

This justification is not actually believed by people like Healey. How could it be when the *Times* itself wants to pull half the British Army of the Rhine out of Germany to form a third world strike force, and when almost half of the US senate wants to pull 90,000 US troops out of Europe, while simultaneously both the *Times* and senator Sam Nunn want to step up offensive preparations such as FOFA?

The real reason for Healey's commitment to increasing conventional spending is simply to prove loyalty to the US and help Britain's status as a major military power in Western Europe. But the effect of all this is for Labour to tail along behind the Reaganites.

The starting point for a Labour alternative to FOFA would be a new foreign policy that challenges Reagan's European policy all along the line, that seeks a non-NATO solution to the powder keg that Eastern Europe has become under Soviet hegemony and that offers socialist answers to the capitalist crisis in Western Europe.

Some leaders of the Labour left, like Tony Benn, have started to raise this agenda and it must now be tackled with urgency by the whole of the left.

# Racism on rise in France

ON NOVEMBER 13 an unemployed Frenchman burst into a cafe in Chateaubriant near Nantes in Western France and shot two Turkish people dead. He did it, he said, because he 'didn't like foreigners'.

The day before, in the district of Epône, near Paris, another Turkish worker had been assassinated by his employers' son accompanied by a security guard.

The victim, a militant of the CGT, (the Communist Party-dominated trade union) was attempting to lead an occupation and hunger strike of the small building construction firm where he worked. The workers there, mostly Turkish, had not been receiving their full wages since the previous June because the company was in financial difficulties.

Racist tension in France is on the increase and Le Pen and his fascist National Front, after their stunning 11 per cent vote in the Euro-elections in June (see Socialist Action 64 and 65) are feeding off it.

A recent opinion poll showed that 41 per cent of those asked thought that there were too many Black Africans in France compared to 18 per cent in 1968. A staggering 26 per cent said they agreed with Le Pen though they would not necessarily vote for him.

A large share of the blame for this rising tide of racism and xenophobia lies with the Socialist Party government, whose own racist campaigns have now reached a new level. On October 10 new measures

were introduced to curb illegal immigrants and also to limit further immigration. Under the new prime minister, Laurent Fabius, the government has been moving rapidly to the right on most issues and Fabius himself has even helped give more credibility to racists and fascists in his much publicised statement that 'Le Pen presents the wrong solutions to what are real problems.' In other words it suits the so-called socialists to blame France's 4.5 million immigrants for the problems of unemployment, housing shortages etc.

Their openly racist measures reflect this. Across the country police powers have been increased, especially at border controls, for dealing with illegal immigrants. About one thousand more police are to be employed on the borders and 13 new detention centres are to be established.

But the move which has prompted the greatest opposition from immigrant organisations is the measure to stop the automatic right of immigrants' families to live in France with them. In order for an immigrants' family to enter the country

under the new regulations they have to prove that they have a stable income and adequate accommodation. The assessment of an adequate income will not include any state benefits not even invalid benefits or family allowances. In relation to housing the catch-22 is of course that most council housing is provided on the basis of urgent need. A single immigrant will not be considered to be in such need and the regularisation of the family's status has to be done with the family residing in their country of origin.

This attack on the right to live as a family is not only racist, it is also sexist, since in most cases it will discriminate against a woman's right to enter the country and will lead to increased harassment of female immigrants.

In fact the French government are most anxious to preserve the family — but only the French one. Heralding the proposed introduction of measures to increase the indigenous French population through allocating grants to women who stay at home after the birth of their third child, Mitterrand himself explained 'socialist' thinking: 'I see a great need for France to increase its birth rate when so many other countries are making such rapid leaps forward. Basically it's a question of our survival as a nation'. It is clear that under this government



Anti-racist demonstration leaves Marseille

both immigrant and French women are going to bear the brunt of racism.

These measures to increase family allowances were drawn up on 13 November by the Council of Ministers. They will benefit only about 30,000 women. The benefits they will receive for having three children will be nowhere near adequate. Such measures will not in reality encourage women to have more children.

They are clearly aimed to whip up an atmosphere forcing women to stay in the home.

Such attacks on both French and immigrant women explain why there were so many women (especially young women) on the 1 December march against racism in Paris.

'Oo-la-ie, oo-la-la, pour l'égalité, on est toujours là' (for equality, we are here to stay) was the slogan most on the lips of the 40,000 people, mainly

immigrants, who turned out on the streets of Paris to greet the young immigrants who had driven on mopeds from five towns around France to converge on Paris (hence the name 'Convergence '84'). Smaller than last year's event (which was one hundred thousand), the demonstration was nonetheless powerful. It drew together many young people independent of the Communists and Socialist parties, who this year gave the event little, and in the

case of the Socialist Party, no support.

Young people had been organising for weeks through local action committees and a national coordinating body which represent an infrastructure of immigrant and other youth which can be drawn together when necessary.

These young people will not easily be crushed by the racist and sexist policies of this government. They will be in the forefront of the fight.

## Black MPs

ON THURSDAY, 13 DECEMBER, Enfield Southgate will elect a new MP. Peter Hamid, a leading black activist in the Labour Party and local councillor will be Labour's candidate.

Below, Socialist Action reprints the press release issued by the Black Activists Campaign (BLAC) in response to the selection of a prospective black MP.

**BLACK ACTIVISTS in the Labour Party applaud the candidacy of Peter Hamid.**

Already we have proved that Black candidates can achieve increased majorities and sometimes even landslides. This has been ably demonstrated in Lambeth, Hackney and Haringey, to mention just a few boroughs.

In the last year, the number of Black councillors in London — the conurbation with the largest Afro-Caribbean and Asian population — has been increased by 10. There are now 80 Black councillors in town halls around the capital.

This is still pitifully low, but the increase in the last 12 months shows we are now firmly on course for 300 Black councillors in London after the borough elections in 1986.

Such a figure would accurately reflect our representation in the population of the

capital.

At the time when the selection process for parliamentary seats to be fought in 1987 or 1988 is about to begin, we are setting another target as well. We want at least 30 Black candidates in parliamentary constituencies at the next General Election. Only that way can we ensure at least 15 Black MPs — half the number we believe we are entitled to as representatives of 4.5 per cent of Britain's overall population.

**By Narendra Makanji**

It is our view that at least 15 Black Labour candidates must be selected in safe seats or seats that the party can and must win if we are to form the next Government.

In certain seats, such as Brent South, Ealing Southall and Birmingham Ladywood, it is arguable that more than half the voting popula-

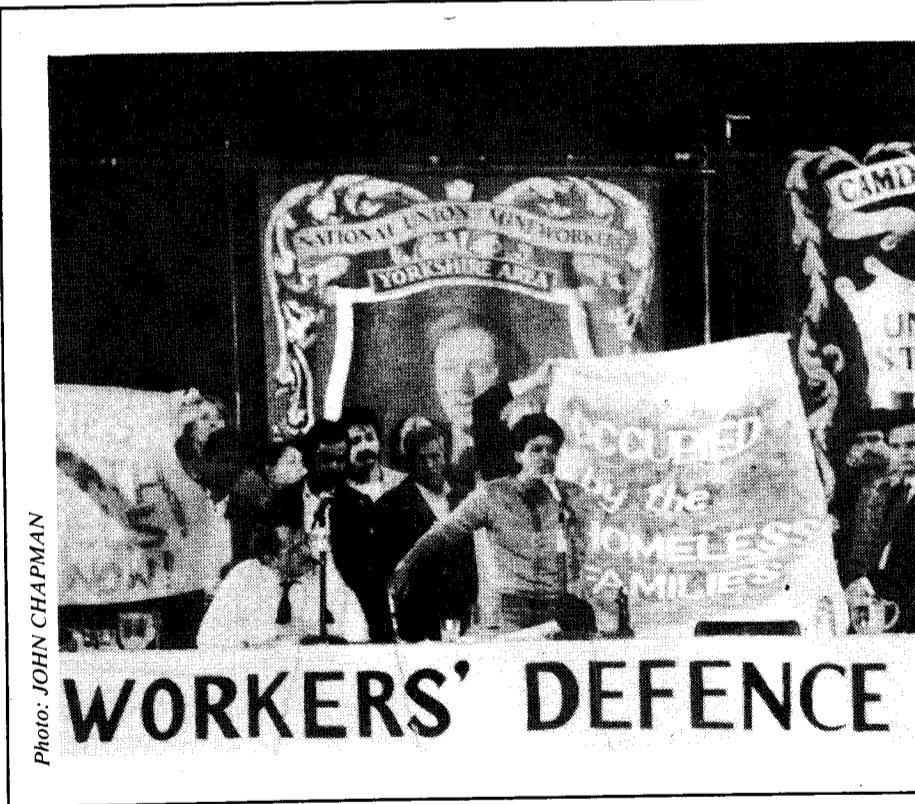


Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

tion is Black. How, then, can the all-white parliamentary Labour Party, the beneficiaries of these votes, morally claim to fully represent communities like these?

The Labour Party needs to win more than 100 seats to form the next Government, and we are confident that at least a quarter of these will be won if the support of Black voters is galvanised. Black Sections in the Labour Party are seeking to do just that, despite our defeat at Conference.

But without Black candidates the task will be doubly, if not trebly

difficult. Leicester South, Leicester East, Edmonton and Slough — seats with wafer thin Conservative majorities but large Black electorates — are prime targets for our objectives.

I hope I don't need to remind you that one million of the eight million votes gained by Labour in the last General Election were from Black people. If it were not for the loyal support of the Black vote the Labour Party would have been pushed into third place behind the Alliance.

Black voters have

proved to be the most loyal of all Labour supporters. Yet there is still no Black MP, no Black member of the National Executive and no Black official in regional or national offices.

This scandalous omission in the representation of Black people is no longer acceptable in the Labour Movement.

We have won the moral argument through Black Sections for guaranteed representation at all levels. Our demand now is that constituency Labour Parties with large Black electorates who have spoken

ON SUNDAY 2 December Judi Bashir, from the Homeless Families occupation in Camden Town Hall, addressed the Mineworkers Defence Committee conference telling of the death of Mrs Shamin Karim and her two children by suffocation on 20 November when a fire swept through their bed and breakfast 'hostel' accommodation in Gloucester Place, Westminster.

Camden Council's response to this tragedy has been appalling. Top of the poll for the number of homeless in London they called the police into the occupation in Camden Town Hall when they went in to negotiate with the predominantly black occupation.

Ken Livingstone summed up the disgust of many when he said: 'I can think of nothing more obscene than the chairs of the race committee and the police committee calling in the police.'

Last Friday the Camden Labour group, reneging on all previous agreements, demanded that the families return to the hostels before rehousing could be considered. The occupation needs all the support it can get. For further details contact: Homeless Families Occupation Committee, 278 4444 ext 2545/2599/2448.

stridently about their commitment to equality of opportunities must deliver Black candidates to represent them in the next General Election campaign.

In return, we as Black activists, will be seeking to ensure an equal number of Afro-Caribbean and Asian candidates as well as an equal number of men and women among their number.

The Labour Party must remember that No Representation leads to Alienation. And Alienation gave us the uprisings against unemployment, police harassment, race

attacks and bad housing in our inner cities three years ago. Black voters will not turn Tory, but we will not be taken for a ride by Labour either.

Peter Hamid, a prominent member of the Black Sections National Steering committee, is a torch-bearer of our campaign for fair representation. He has an exemplary record as a campaigning councillor who is well-known for his crusade against racism in immigration laws, discrimination in housing, jobs and education.

He is, in other words, a fine example of a truly modern socialist.

# Ford women:

## An equality battle

LAST WEDNESDAY the Dagenham machinists strike over regrading was made official by the Transport and General Workers' Union.

But the company is still refusing to negotiate. It's afraid that if it gives into the women's demands for regrading this will unleash a wave of demands from skilled workers in Fords for increased pay.

The demand the Ford women are raising to be upgraded in the work they do can be traced back to the battle they had for equal pay in 1968.

While the principle of equal pay was conceded at that time, and the Labour government went on to introduce the Equal Pay Act in 1970, the company adjusted the machinists job evaluation marks but refused to upgrade them from grade 'B' to 'C'.

What the Ford women are now up against is the deviousness of employers who all over the country in the last 14 years have reorganised their workforce, refusing to change job categories or have put women into new job categories, to avoid the equal pay legislation being effectively applied.

When Lil Thompson one of the shop stewards at

Dagenham, says 'The reason we are in this grade is simple, it's because we are women' she is dead right. The dispute is about forcing the company to recognise that women's skills are of equal value to men's. It is not simply a regrading battle it is an anti-discrimination battle.

Bernie Passingham, T&G convenor at Dagenham, also points out how unfair the women's grading is. 'It sticks out like a sore thumb' he says. If you analyse the way in which the women's work is downgraded you can see clearly how employers undervalue women's work.

The marks the women receive are separated into four categories. The aggregate of these marks at the moment is four points below grade C.

But the women claim



Photo: MORNING STAR

that they are not given their due in four areas of their work. They are marked 'moderate' on physical effort even when they have to manipulate unsupple material through sewing machines causing injury to their wrists.

By Valerie Coultas

Eastman cutters, who work with flat material (men) are rated 'moderate' while machinists (women) who have to turn that material into three dimensional headrests are rated 'low' in the 'ability to visualise shapes and spatial relationships in two or three dimensions' category.

And again in the degree of dimensional accuracy area the women are rated lower than the cut-

ters. If the machinists did not recognise quickly a nick made in the material out of place, by more than one eighth of an inch, and mask it using the sewing machines the result would be a bad finish. Women covering up for men again!

The women are also rated as 'moderate' on safety although they can suffer needles through fingers, damaged wrists and tendons, and a disease of the arm known as tenosynitis, brought about through excessive exertion. It's clear why the women machinists need six months training to be equipped to do the job.

What determines women's low pay at Fords as elsewhere is not their lack of skill but their low bargaining power.

The women at Fords,

by once again taking strike action over this issue, have begun to hit the company where it hurts. Their strike is costing the company £10 million a day and 8,000 assembly workers have had to be laid off at the Fords and Dagenham plants due to their action.

It has also stopped the workforce in those two plants voting on the company's pay offer. If the claim is voted for the women could be left out in the cold alone.

It's therefore vital that the battle is spread quickly. This requires the union to send pickets to the docks to stop all Ford car imports. January is a key month for Ford car sales.

A short, sharp victory for the women's claim will strengthen the position of every worker at Fords.

# STUDENTS



Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

## NUS: new leadership needed

By Grant Keir

**MEDIA COVERAGE** of the National Union of Students Conference in Blackpool earlier this week, concentrated on the antics of the Federation of Conservative Students and the hostile reception given to a Tory Minister speaking at a Fringe Meeting.

The image created was one of a Conference torn between the lunatic ideas of the far right and the alleged violence of the so called, 'Red fascist Left'. The real story of this Conference however was very different.

The National Organisation of Labour Students, (NOLS) manoeuvred its way out of the three crucial debates — on the miners' strike, on Harrington's presence at PNL (the National Front Organiser) and the student grant. Far from reflecting the growing radicalism of students this conference saw the NOLS/NUS leadership remain in firm control.

The NOLS leadership combine a verbal leftism with a thoroughly rightist political practise. They retain their base of support by doing just enough to allow the discontent and anger that is building up amongst students to vent itself once in a while.

On the miners' strike, a union which has millions in assets donated just £1,000. All in the name of 'getting back to the members to raise support for the miners, rather than giving token donations of £20,000'. They argued that ultra vires payments to the miners were a 'diversion' from the real struggle, leaving their constituent organisations completely open to attack by the courts. In reality they scabbed on both the miners and their most militant members who are prepared to support the NUM and take on the college authorities at the same time.

On the dispute at PNL, they said that ILEA and the trade unions at the college were the only ones that could get rid of Harrington. What a wet excuse for stabbing PNL students in the back!

On grants, Phil Woolas, NUS President, even had the gall to claim that the NUS leaders were responsible for the militant demonstrations on 28 November. This was when 130 students were arrested on Westminster Bridge for protesting at the attack on free access to higher education.

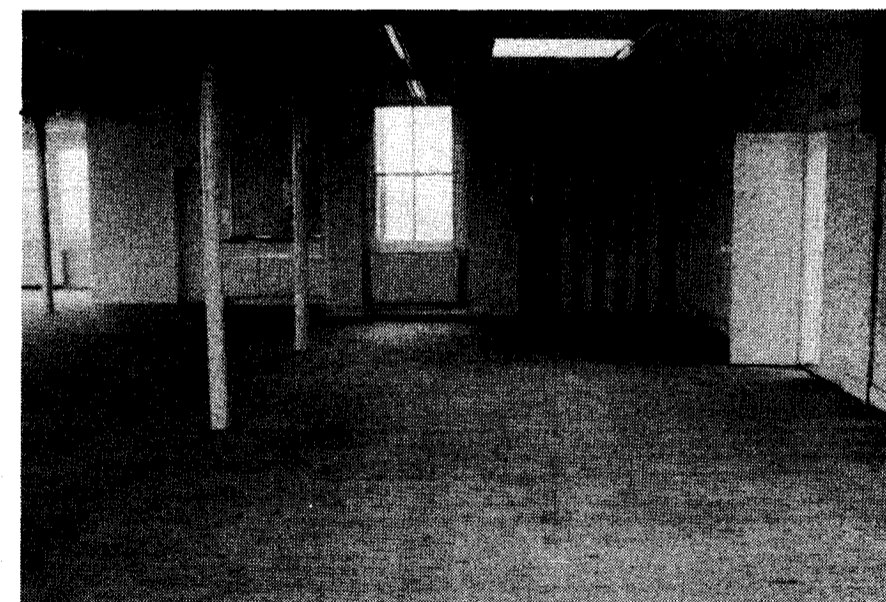
Every delegate at the conference knew he was lying through his teeth but he got away with it. In addition no clear mandate was given to the executive about how the grants system should be defended. It is still under attack despite the Tories climbdown on the better off parents contributions.

The debate over PNL was the closest the left got to upsetting the iron grip of the NOLS leaders. Here the SWP led the attack but it doesn't have a real framework for mounting a full scale challenge because it's not willing to fight for the leadership of the union. It prefers to stay with the rank and file.

And this is precisely the opposite to what is needed in the NUS right now. The NOLS leaders get away with their talk left, don't do anything line because of the failure of the left among students to organise the base of militancy into a head on challenge for leadership.

Those students involved in fighting the Tories aren't happy with the NOLS leaders. A current has to be built inside NOLS that can give a focus to this layer of students.

Such a current will give a national voice to the left in NUS conference and begin to pose a real threat to the complacency of the NOLS leaders.



# Xmas gift for new building

WE ARE there — well, more or less. The lease on our new building is at the solicitors and this week we will be signing it. Now we must do everything we can to make sure that we get in there before 31 January.

We have agreed the design of the offices. We have agreed on exactly what printing equipment we need. This week we tied up another bargain by ordering a new camera which is £1,000 less than its normal retail price. Now we must get the cash to order the shelving and partitioning and put a deposit on the camera.

You readers by your excellent response last month made sure that we get the most modern and up-to-date typesetting machine at £6,500 less than its market price. We are confident that you are going to make just as good a response to getting the deposit for the camera and raising the cash for the building work. Every readers' meeting *this week* must work out how to raise cash.

Rush in the donations. Send in the bankers' orders. The most important Xmas present this year is for your Fund Drive. Please do just that.

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# Socialist ACTION



## Massacre in Bhopal

**BHOPAL**, the town in India that has been the scene of a tragedy on a massive scale, stands alongside Seveso in Italy, Three Mile Island in the States and our own Sellafield (Windscale), as evidence of the truth that for capitalism human life is the least valuable commodity on the market.

And of course the least valuable human lives of all are the millions who live in poverty and hunger in the countries of the 'third world'.

If Bhopal had been in the United States the horror would be exactly the same, but we can be sure that the compensation that Union Carbide would be forced to pay out would be on an entirely different scale.

If it had been in Britain we would not be treated to mealy-mouthed editorials like that in Monday's *Guardian*, which urged that before we all get too excited about Bhopal we should remember the

tremendous good that Union Carbide's fertilisers had done for the 'third world!' as a whole!

By Jude Woodward

One could hardly imagine this response if 3000 people had just been killed in the middle of Birmingham or London.

The Indian government's response has not been any better. It was undoubtedly direct intervention from the national government that secured the release of Carbide's chair, Warren Anderson, for a derisory bail figure.

The complicity of the Indian government in

covering up what it knew about the dangers of the plant is not something that Ragiv Gandhi is keen on having out in the middle of a general election.

The compensation granted to the people of Bhopal must be at a level that really does take account of the tremendous suffering they have undergone.

Firms like Union Carbide must be forced to pay an enormous price for their neglect of human life. That is the only way to ensure that such 'accidents' never happen again.

Unfortunately as long as companies like Union Carbide exist to milk huge profits out of the poorest countries, and as long as the governments of those countries go along with it, we can be sure that Bhopal is only the latest in a long line of similar massacres.

# Electoral farce in Grenada



Kendrick Radix, leader of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement

ON 3 DECEMBER Grenada held its first elections since the US invasion a year ago. They were hailed in the press as a triumph for 'moderation'.

The victor, Herbert Blaize's New National Party (NNP), was so 'moderate' it fully supports the presence of American military forces in the island and was openly backed in the election by Ronald Reagan.

What was *not* reported in the British press was the truly gigantic pressure and fraud in the election — including both American funding of the NNP, threats, the dismissal of the electoral supervisor, and the mysterious, disappearance of 15,000 people from the electoral roll since the last elections.

Following the poll the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, which groups the supporters of Grenada's socialist prime minister assassinated before the invasion, put out the following statement on the elections. The editing is by Socialist Action.

THE MAURICE Bishop Patriotic Movement wishes to inform the people that we totally reject the so called victory of the NNP, as the elections of December 3, were not free and fair.

For months our party has been warning the people of the US plan to rig the election and install a government of their choice. An incomplete electoral register was prepared which left out thousands of those entitled to vote.

It must be seen that the 1984 list contained only 48,000 votes, compared with 63,000 in 1976 eight years ago. The taking of photographs made many people afraid that the CIA

will use such information to find out facts about them.

More than 3,000 Grenadians were captured in October 1983 by invading U.S. forces and released on condition that 'They do no engage in politics and anti-government activity'. The short period of electoral registration did not allow those who wished to be registered to do so. It must be recalled that no registration has been conducted in Grenada for eight years.

The firing of the independent supervisor of elections, Mr Roy Chateau, and 25 of his experienced workers put the elections clearly in the con-

trol of the Americans. The massive buying of votes, fixing of roofs, cash payments, distribution of clothing, rum, food and even aeroplane flights in the campaign for the NNP confirmed the interference by the CIA and the United States government in our internal affairs.

It is now known that the NNP spent over three millions dollars and hired 500 workers for its campaign. All this money came directly from the US. The presence in Grenada in the past years of Mr Loren Lawrence and his aid Mr Mathew Blockwell, both well known election cooks of Jamaica fame, further exposed the role of the United States. It is well known that in several countries specially prepared ballot papers have been used to fix elections.

The presence of hundreds of foreign occupation troops in Grenada created fear and intimidated the population. In this climate neither the United Nations nor the Commonwealth of which Grenada is a member sent observers as they recognised these facts.

This election, which was totally designed to discredit our party and its

leaders, instead has exposed the length to which the US and local reaction will go to install a government of big business interest. The rigging has been so massive that there would be no opposition in the parliament. So much for the 'return to democracy' of which they loudly boasted. Our participation in this election has concretely exposed the big lie and our party has come out stronger than ever.

Our party calls on our citizens both at home and abroad to stand firm in defence of our independence and renews the call for a withdrawal of all foreign military presence from our homeland.

As patriots we pledge our loyalty to our country and people we will continue to struggle for Peace, National Unity, Bread and Justice, for real human rights and the advancement of the cause for the working people of the islands of Petit Martinique, Carriacou and Grenada.

One People, One Nation, One Future.

In the spirit of Maurice Bishop the struggle continues.

FORWARD ON OUR FEET NOT ON OUR KNEES.